

# **An Exploration of the Association between Anxiety and/or Depression and Relationship Attachment in Individuals Affected with Galactosemia**

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Galactosemia is a rare autosomal recessive disorder that occurs when galactose accumulates to toxic levels in the body. Prior to the addition of galactosemia to the newborn screen, undetected infants affected with galactosemia suffered from liver failure, kidney damage, and brain damage resulting in death during the neonatal period. These complications can be avoided with a diet free of lactose and galactose. The adult phenotype of galactosemia has not been formally studied until recently which has consequently resulted in large gaps in providers' knowledge about the manifestations of galactosemia in adults. After careful study, we are learning that even with strict diet control, adults affected with galactosemia suffer from complications such as speech deficits in addition to learning and intellectual disabilities. Adults affected with galactosemia also show increased rates of anxiety and depression. Furthermore, both males and females affected with galactosemia appear less comfortable forming relationships outside that of their nuclear family. The aim of this study is to assess the correlation between relationship attachment and anxiety and depression levels in adults affected with galactosemia. Validated screening surveys were used to screen subjects for anxiety and depression and to assess attachment patterns in a variety of close relationships. It was hypothesized that individuals affected with galactosemia who experience anxiety or depression exhibit less secure attachment patterns than those without anxiety or depression. Results indicated that individuals with anxiety and/or depression are more likely to have a secure relationship with their mothers than individuals without anxiety and/or depression. Individuals without anxiety and/or depression display a stronger association with secure relationships with their father, significant other, and best friend than individuals with anxiety and/or depression.