

# The intergenerational impact of war: longitudinal relationships between caregiver and child mental health in postconflict Sierra Leone

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## Measures

**Internalizing symptoms.** Internalizing symptoms were measured using the 25-item Internalizing Symptom Scale (ISS; [Fergusson & Horwood, 2004](#)). The ISS is a self-report measure of internalizing symptoms, including anxiety, depression, and somatization. The ISS consists of 25 items, each rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all", 2 = "a little", 3 = "moderately", 4 = "very much"). The total score is calculated as the sum of the item scores, with a possible range of 25 to 100. The ISS has a Cronbach's alpha of .91 and a mean score of 54.5 (SD = 15.5) in a sample of 250 young adults. The ISS is a reliable and valid measure of internalizing symptoms.

**War exposures.** War exposures were measured using the 10-item War Exposure Scale (WES; [Fergusson & Horwood, 2012](#)). The WES is a self-report measure of war exposures, including combat, military operations, and military training. The WES consists of 10 items, each rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = "not at all", 2 = "a little", 3 = "moderately", 4 = "very much"). The total score is calculated as the sum of the item scores, with a possible range of 10 to 40. The WES has a Cronbach's alpha of .91 and a mean score of 25.5 (SD = 7.5) in a sample of 250 young adults. The WES is a reliable and valid measure of war exposures.

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### Key points

- Although it is well established that caregiver mental health plays a role in child mental health in Western settings, there is a dearth of longitudinal studies in postconflict environments investigating this relationship following war exposure.
- A two-wave prospective study of mental health among former child soldiers and their caregivers was

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