

Running Head: RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS FOR DEPRESSIVE SYMPTOMS

Risk and Protective Factors for Depressive Symptoms in Urban African American Adolescents

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## Author Bios

Dr. Darius Tandon is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, with a joint appointment in the Department of Population, Family, & Reproductive Health in the Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Tandon, trained as a community psychologist, has interests in the prevention of mental health disorders in low-income African American adolescents. Dr. Tandon has also conducted research on mental health status and access among pregnant and recently delivered low-income African American women. Recent publications have appeared in *Health Promotion Practice*, *Maternal and Child Journal*, and the *Journal of Adolescent Health*. Dr. Tandon is Deputy Editor of the peer-reviewed journal, *Progress in Community Health Partnerships: Research, Education, & Action*.

Dr. Barry Solomon is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Pediatrics at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, with a joint appointment in the Department of Population, Family, & Reproductive Health in the Bloomberg School of Public Health. Dr. Solomon is also the Associate Director of the Harriet Lane Clinic, which provides pediatric health care services to low-income children and adolescents from predominately low-income backgrounds. Dr. Solomon's research interests include injury and violence prevention, the delivery of children's mental health services, and pediatric resident education. Recent publications have appeared in the *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, *Ambulatory Pediatrics*, and *Journal of Pediatrics*.

### Abstract

There is limited understanding of risk and protective factors associated with depression among African American adolescents living in impoverished, urban settings. A cross-sectional study was conducted to identify a range of risk and protective factors associated with depressive symptoms among low-income urban African American adolescents. The sample (n = 467) was comprised of African American adolescents from three high-poverty urban neighborhoods in Baltimore, Maryland. A self-administered read aloud survey completed by adolescents assessed depressive symptoms, as well as various individual- and environmental-level risk and protective factors. Multivariate analyses indicated that female gender, living with an adult with a substance abuse problem, greater exposure to physical violence, and greater peer delinquency were associated with higher depressive symptoms. Greater home assets and self-awareness were associated with lower depressive symptoms. Future interventions to prevent and treat depression among urban African American adolescents should focus on minimizing their risk factors while enhancing those factors found to be protective.

**Keywords:** Adolescent, depression, risk factors, protective factors, African American