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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ADOLESCENT DEPRESSION

AND

THE FAMILY STRUCTURE OF THE ADOLESCENT

AN ABSTRACT OF

A THESIS

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by

Eileen Metzgar

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## ABSTRACT

A group of ninth grade students from a suburban high school in the northeast were examined to determine the incidence of existing depression and how it related to their family structure, as well as several other demographic variables. One hundred and forty-one students participated in completing a Reynolds Adolescent Depression Scale (RADS) questionnaire which revealed that 18 (12.8%) of the students exhibited endorsed symptoms of depression. The hypothesis that adolescents from homes where divorce has occurred will have a significantly higher score on the RADS than adolescents from an intact family was rejected. The hypothesis that adolescents from homes where divorce has occurred within the past year will have a significantly higher score on the RADS than adolescents who come from an intact family or a family where the divorce has occurred within one to five years was rejected. However, 8 of the 18 depressed students (44.4%) reported that their parents had a problem with their own use of alcohol. Since adolescent depression is very often a precursor of adolescent suicide, the outcome of this study suggests serious considerations be given to the effects of alcoholism in the family on the vulnerable teenager.