

During adolescence, females are much more vulnerable to depression than males (Merikangas et al., 2010). This increased prevalence may be due to the way females experience interpersonal stressors (Rudolph, 2002). The aim of the present study was to use a multi-informant approach to assess whether differential social status goal orientations interacted with physiological reactivity to interpersonal stress to predict depressive symptoms in 20 children, ages 9 to 12 years. Three main hypotheses were tested: first, it was expected that increased levels of popularity goals (i.e., the desire to be socially central or “cool”) would interact with increased stress reactivity to predict increased levels of depressive symptoms. Second, it was expected that preference goals (i.e., the desire to be well-liked) would predict decreased levels of depressive symptoms. Third, it was expected that there would be mean level gender differences in popularity goals, with females endorsing relatively higher popularity goals. Results partially supported study hypotheses. There was a positive association between popularity goals and depressive symptoms; however, no significant interaction effects were found. Additionally, males unexpectedly endorsed more popularity goals than females. Limitations of the study and implications of these findings are discussed.