

Examination of Adverse Childhood Experiences in Two Populations of Children Receiving Mental Health Services

Symposium Introduction

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The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study

- ▶ Collaboration between the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Kaiser Permanente
- ▶ Examined the relationship between health / behavioral outcomes of adult Kaiser Permanente patients and nine types of childhood trauma (reported retrospectively)
- ▶ Calculated an Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) score as the number of different types of trauma experienced by children

Original ACE Score Categories

- ▶ **Abuse**
 - Emotional
 - Physical
 - Sexual
- ▶ **Household dysfunction**
 - Mother treated violently
 - Substance abuse
 - Imprisonment
 - Mental illness
 - Not raised by both biological parents
- ▶ **Neglect**
 - Physical
 - Emotional

**ACE Study
Summary of Findings**

- ▶ About two-thirds of participants reported at least 1 adverse childhood experience
- ▶ More than 1 in 5 participants reported three or more adverse childhood experiences
- ▶ Increasing ACE scores are related to
 - early initiation of smoking, sexual activity, illicit drug use, adolescent pregnancies, HIV and STDs, and suicide attempts during childhood and adolescence
 - increased risk of heart disease, chronic lung disease, liver disease, and other risks for the leading causes of death
 - increased number of comorbid conditions

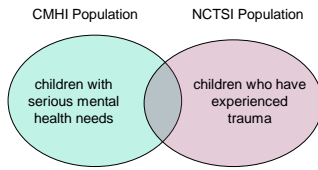
**ACE Study
Summary of Findings (cont.)**

- ▶ **Conclusions:**
 - adverse childhood experiences affect later health and well-being
 - degree of effect depends in part on degree of trauma experienced
- ▶ Findings imply that prevention of, and early intervention for, traumatic experiences would be beneficial.

Relationship Between Trauma Experienced by Children and Their Mental Health Outcomes

- ▶ Research on children's experiences with traumatic stress – degree of emotional and behavioral problems is related to experiencing multiple vs. single traumatic events
- ▶ Children and youth experiencing maltreatment are at greater risk for significant problems later in life

Two Populations of Children Studied



- ▶ **CMHI: Children's Mental Health Initiative**
- ▶ **NCTSI: National Child Traumatic Stress Initiative**