Adverse Experiences in Childhood
(ACE Study)

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Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

• 14-year-old study involves 17,337 adults who became members of Kaiser Permanente, a health care maintenance organization in San Diego, between 1995 and 1997.

• After visiting a primary care facility, they voluntarily filled out a standard medical questionnaire that included questions about their childhood.

• The questionnaire asked them about 10 types of child trauma:
  ● Three types of abuse (sexual, physical and emotional).
  ● Two types of neglect (physical and emotional).
  ● Five types of family dysfunction (having a mother who was treated violently, a household member who’s an alcoholic or drug user, who’s been imprisoned, or diagnosed with mental illness, or parents who are separated or divorced).
Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

• More than 50 research papers published since 1998

• **Adverse childhood experiences are common** – 64% of the study participants had experienced one or more categories of adverse childhood experiences.

• **Strong link between adverse childhood experiences and adult onset of chronic illness** - those with ACE scores of 4 or more had significantly higher rates of heart disease and diabetes than those with ACE scores of zero.
  
  - *chronic pulmonary lung disease increased 390%
  - *hepatitis increased 240%
  - *depression increased 460%
  - *suicide increased 1,220%
Adverse Childhood Experiences Study

- **Multiple ACEs connected to early death** - people with six or more ACEs died nearly 20 years earlier on average than those without ACEs
  - 60.6 years vs. 79.1 years

- **Child maltreatment has long-term impacts** - those who had experienced child maltreatment were more likely to engage in risky health-related behaviors during childhood and adolescence:
  - early initiation of smoking
  - sexual activity
  - illicit drug use
  - adolescent pregnancies
  - suicide attempts

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