Child Abuse

US Dept. HHS
Child Maltreatment 2016 (Feb 2018)

Latest national child abuse and neglect stats.

Bucci M, Marques SS, Oh D, Harris NB.
Detailed review of the concepts and consequences of ACEs and toxic stress.

McLaughlin KA, Lambert HK.
Child Trauma Exposure and Psychopathology: Mechanisms of Risk and Resilience. Curr Opin Psychol. 2017 Apr;14:29-34. PMID: 27868085
Review of mechanisms that link child trauma with psychopathology, and mitigating protective factors.

“Amendments made to the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act in 2003 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act in 2004...required a referral to early intervention (EI) services for all children under age 3 involved in a substantiated case of child abuse, neglect, or illegal drug exposure.” However, in a study from 2008-2009, only 18.2% of children in substantiated cases received a referral, with Hispanic children of immigrants the least likely to receive services.

Neidecker JM, Gealt DB, Luksch JR, Weaver MD.
For 110 male and 102 female athletes aged 11-18 who experienced their first concussion, there was no difference in concussion symptoms found between age groups or type of sport. However, there was a significant gender difference in that female athletes remained symptomatic for 28 days compared with males at 11 days. [While this study is for sports, it is possible that these findings may apply to abuse-related concussion, and may extend beyond the age of 18.]

Review the oral and dental aspects of physical and sexual abuse and dental neglect, and the role of physicians and dentists in evaluating such conditions.
From a survey of 1807 Sri Lankan adolescents, 2.6% reported fecal incontinence (FI). FI was significantly associated with physical, sexual and emotional abuse. These children also had more physical symptoms; poorer health-related quality of life; and poorer emotional, social, and school functioning.

Among 58,765 school-age children, 4.1% experienced chronic school absenteeism, defined as > 14 days absent in the past year. “Experiencing multiple childhood ACEs, especially neighborhood violence or family substance abuse, is associated with chronic absenteeism.”

Adult Manifestations of Child Abuse

From a long term national survey, ever smoking and obesity were conditions associated with various childhood adversities. “We find no evidence of association modification by gender, socioeconomic position, or race and/or ethnicity.”

For 51 patients diagnosed with overactive bladder (OAB), 29.4% reported childhood sexual trauma vs. 6.7% in a control group. OAB patients with a history of childhood sexual abuse also reported more pain symptoms, poorer mood, and greater number and degree of physical symptoms.

Experiences of physical, but not emotional, violence at any point of life were associated with mobility disability in 1,995 elders in 5 cities internationally.

In this telephone survey of 498 community adult Israeli women, 53% of those with serious binge eating behaviors reported childhood emotional abuse vs. 37% of those with minimal symptoms. Anger and self-criticism were the drivers of this emotional abuse-binge eating relationship, but not anxiety or depression.

After controlling for age and education, while almost all of 697 Canadian women initiated breastfeeding, those with a history of ACEs were only half as likely to exclusively breastfeed at 6 months as those without ACEs.

Controlling for multiple variables, 154 mothers with a history of personal childhood sexual abuse showed less warmth toward daughters, but not sons. “Given previous research suggesting that maternal warmth predicts child well-being, the current finding may represent an important avenue of intergenerational transmission of risk in girls.”

Adolescents

In this study of 358 Italian high school students, internet addiction was associated in boys with a trauma history, and in girls with a mood disorder.
Edwards KM, Palmer KM, Lindemann KG, Gidycz CA.  
Is the End Really the End? Prevalence and Correlates of College Women’s Intentions to Return to an Abusive Relationship.  
Violence Against Women. 2018 Feb;24(2):207-222. PMID: 29332532

Of 56 college women who left an abusive heterosexual dating relationship, 64% had contact with their abusive partner post break-up, and 14% reported moderate to high likelihood that they would return. Intentions to return were predicted by factors such as fewer perceived alternatives, having contact post break-up, and social pressure to return.

Reidy DE, Smith-Darden JP, Kernsmith PD.  
Behavioral and Mental Health Correlates of Youth Stalking Victimization: A Latent Class Approach.  

From a cross-sectional sample of 1235 youths from 13 schools, 14% of girls and 13% of boys reported stalking victimization. “Adolescents in the victim class reported more symptoms of post-traumatic stress, mood disorder, and hopelessness, as well as more instances of alcohol use, binge drinking, and physical dating violence victimization.”

Domestic Violence – Effects on Children

Martínez-Galiano JM.  
Mother-newborn health indicators in possible victims of gender-based violence during pregnancy.  
Appl Nurs Res. 2017 Apr;34:48-51. PMID: 28342623

Of 141 Spanish pregnant women, 44 experiencing IPV complained of more pain and required more medication during labor, and had more non-reassuring fetal heart tracings, lower rates of breast feeding, and higher risk of low birth weight babies.

Grasso DJ, Petitclerc A, Henry DB, et. al.  
Examining Patterns of Exposure to Family Violence in Preschool Children: A Latent Class Approach.  
J Trauma Stress. 2016 Dec;29(6):491-499. PMID: 27859679

From a study of 474 Chicagoan preschool children age 3-6 years, 15.2% experienced polyvictimization with exposure to violence directed both towards the child and between caregivers, and 49.5% were exposed to harsh parenting. 35.2% had low exposure to at-home violence.

Domestic Violence – Physical Health

Depression, daily stressors and inflammatory responses to high-fat meals: when stress overrides healthier food choices.  
Mol Psychiatry. 2017 Mar;22(3):476-482. PMID: 27646264

For a group of healthy breast cancer survivors and matched controls, eating an inflammatory-inducing meal resulted in an expected increase in blood inflammatory markers, which did not happen after a healthier meal. However, when there was prior day stress, women developed increased inflammatory markers after both type of meals. In addition, those with a history of major depression showed significantly higher blood pressure response after eating any meal. [As daily stress and depression are common with IPV, this is one mechanism for the association with increased risk of cardiovascular and immune disease.]

Roberts AL, Malspeis S, Kubzansky LD, et. al.  
Association of Trauma and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder With Incident Systemic Lupus Erythematosus in a Longitudinal Cohort of Women.  
Arthritis Rheumatol. 2017 Nov;69(11):2162-2169. PMID: 28929625

From the Nurses’ Health Study II “We found a nearly 3-fold elevated risk of incident SLE [lupus] among women with probable PTSD and a >2-fold higher risk of incident SLE among women who had experienced any traumatic event compared with trauma-unexposed women.”

Bartoszek G, Hannan SM, Kamm J, Pamp B, Maieritsch KP.  
Trauma-Related Pain, Reexperiencing Symptoms, and Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder: A Longitudinal Study of Veterans.  

For 99 treatment-seeking veterans, trauma-related pain, but not trauma-unrelated pain, was associated with PTSD re-experiencing, avoidance, numbing, hyperarousal and increased pain intensity. “We thus found that trauma-related pain was indirectly related to poor PTSD treatment outcomes via re-experiencing symptoms.” [This may also apply to the civilian population – that chronic abuse-trauma-related pain and PTSD may cyclically reinforce each other as reminders.]
Domestic Violence – Mental Health


For 239 low-income pregnant women who participated in a nurse home visitation intervention and who reported recent IPV, 40% of the women were identified as having PTSD, which increased with age to nearly 80% of women aged 30 and older. 65% identified non-IPV-related traumas as their most disturbing traumatic event, such as childhood abuse, but the increasing PTSD rates with age suggest the cumulative effect of trauma including perinatal IPV.


“Summary and commentary on the growing literature and current developments related to the genetic underpinnings of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).” [Note this entire journal issue is devoted to traumatic stress – Table of Contents at https://www.sciencedirect.com/journal/current-opinion-in-psychology/vol/14]

Elder/Dependent Adult Abuse


“By 2050, 25% of the US population will consist of individuals older than age 65 compared to the 12.5% makeup in 2000...The issue of elder abuse should be a focus of intervention in trauma centers across the country, education in our medical schools and residency programs, and for our legislators.”


From focus groups of elders and involved professionals, “dependency, vulnerability, power and control, social isolation, stress, and care burden play a central role in their explanations for the occurrence of violence in later life.”


Of 250 elder abuse cases at a protective service program in New York City, higher service utilization (SU) was associated with females, poor health, perceived danger, previous help-seeking, and self or family referral. Lower SU was related to Hispanic race/ethnicity, being married, and child/grandchild perpetrator.


Of 101 college students with disabilities, 22% reported some form of abuse over the past year, and 62% physical or sexual abuse before the age of 17. 40% reported little or no knowledge of abuse related resources, and only 27% had reported a recent incident.


350 male and female adults with diverse developmental disabilities reported “abuse at high rates, with 61.9% of men and 58.2% of women reporting abuse as children and 63.7% of men and 68.2% of women reporting abuse as adults. More women than men reported adult sexual abuse, but there were no gender differences in the prevalence of any other form of abuse...intimate partners represented the minority of abusers for both men and women.”
LGBTQ Concerns


Of 92 transgender women recruited through LGBT service organizations and support groups, 52% reported childhood sexual abuse, 53% rape, 56% IPV, 57% incarceration, 53% did not have health insurance, 63% were not employed or in school, and 49% had been recently homeless. Of 83 who knew their status, 60% were HIV positive.

Cultural Concerns


For 105 American Indian/Alaska Native women involved in prostitution in 3 Minnesota cities, history of childhood abuse, foster care, arrests, homelessness, rape, assault, and racism were common as were symptoms of PTSD and dissociation. Most saw colonization and prostitution of AI/AN women as connected.

Sexual Assault


For a group of college women assessed during a two month period, women with high social anxiety were approximately three times more likely to report unwanted alcohol-related sexual experiences. Authors suggest social anxiety is a modifiable variable for risk-reduction.

Parks KA, Frone MR, Muraven M, Boyd C. Nonmedical use of prescription drugs and related negative sexual events: Prevalence estimates and correlates in college students. Addict Behav. 2017 Feb;65:258-263. PMID: 27567398

Human Trafficking


“Commercial sexual exploitation and sex trafficking of children and adolescents represent a severe form of child abuse and an important pediatric health concern. Youth who are commercially sexually exploited have a constellation of clinical risk factors and high rates of unmet physical and mental health needs.”


From surveys of 173 individuals who had endured US-based human trafficking, 68% had been seen by a health care provider while being trafficked. 56% visited ED/urgent care, followed by primary care, dentists, and ob/gyns.


Authors “suggests principles of good practice based on an ethic of care, and calls for action at the international, national and professional levels to establish a human rights based system of governance for international medically assisted reproduction” which at times violates human rights and is basically reproductive trafficking.
Perpetrators

Holodya BJ, Newman WJ. 
Childhood animal cruelty, bestiality, and the link to adult interpersonal violence. 

This article reviews the legal status of animal cruelty in the US, describes current knowledge regarding the link between animal cruelty and violence, and proposes classifications for individuals who engage in bestiality in determining the risk of future interpersonal offending.

Zagrodney JL, Cummings JA. 
Impact of Perpetrator Type on Attributions of Mother Fault in Child Sexual Abuse. 

From an online community survey of adults reading various vignettes, participants assigned significantly higher levels of fault for childhood sexual assault to the non-offending mother when the perpetrator was the mother’s boyfriend as opposed to the child’s biological father.

Lambie I, Johnston E. 
"I Couldn’t Do It to a Kid Knowing What It Did to Me": The Narratives of Male Sexual Abuse Victims’ Resiliency to Sexually Offending. 
Int J Offender Ther Comp Criminol. 2016 Jun;60(8):897-918. PMID: 25633386

While research has shown that child sexual abuse victims are overrepresented among sexual abuse offenders, a large proportion of child sexual abuse victims do not sexually offend. Of 47 men who had experienced childhood sexual abuse but who did not go on to offend, reasons given included empathy, morals and lack of sexual desire. “The victim-offender pathway is far from inevitable as most participants stated their reason for not offending was directly related to their own experience of sexual abuse victimisation.”

Police and Court Systems

Sechrist SM, Weil JD. 
Assessing the Impact of a Focused Deterrence Strategy to Combat Intimate Partner Domestic Violence. 
Violence Against Women. 2018 Mar;24(3):243-265. PMID: 29332533

A police and community partnership which helped resolve system issues to hold DV offenders accountable led to significant reductions in calls, injuries and recidivism.

Jarlenski M, Hogan C, Bogen DL, et. al. 
Characterization of U.S. State Laws Requiring Health Care Provider Reporting of Perinatal Substance Use. 

Review of state policies and laws regarding provider reporting of perinatal substance use. “Twenty states (corresponding with 31% of births) had laws requiring health care providers to report perinatal substance use to child protective authorities, and four states (18% of births) had laws requiring reporting only when a health care provider believed the substance use was associated with child maltreatment.”

Providers

Sullivan CM. 
Understanding How Domestic Violence Support Services Promote Survivor Well-being: A Conceptual Model. 
Comparison of Adding Treatment of PTSD During and After Shelter Stay to Standard Care in Residents of Battered Women's Shelters: Results of a Randomized Clinical Trial.


In a randomized trial of women who received standard shelter services vs. a specific PTSD treatment program, those with PTSD treatment reported less PTSD symptoms from IPV, less severe depression, more empowerment, and were more likely to be employed at 3 and 6 month follow-up.

Building a Novel Health Curriculum for Survivors of Intimate Partner Violence Residing at a Transitional Housing Program.


12 interactive health workshops for transitional housing residents based on survivors’ experiences, needs, and interests were helpful both individually and in building a supportive community. Curriculum development is discussed.


Brief but detailed article defines and exemplifies the dynamic of coercive control that victims may have a hard time labeling on their own. Author reminds clinicians to inform themselves about other ways individuals are exploited with or without physical injury, to ensure resources are made available to those who may be being harmed through manipulation, threats, fear, and isolation.

Occupational Therapy Services for Individuals Who Have Experienced Domestic Violence.


National statement from the AOTA, reviewing the impact of domestic violence and the role for assessment and interventional treatment with occupational therapy.

Using State Administrative Data to Identify Social Complexity Risk Factors for Children.


Using state administrative data for 505,367 children and parents receiving Medicaid insurance, authors found that 9 of 11 identifiable social complexity risk factors were associated with a higher rate of ED use, and that that rate increased with increasing number of risk factors. This type of analysis could be used to score primary care medical homes to identify and distribute needed resources.


Lessons learned from establishing a Connecticut statewide initiative to create a trauma-informed child welfare system.


Child Maltreat. 2016 May;21(2):147-55. PMID: 26603357

After a trauma-informed parenting workshop for foster, adoptive and kinship caregivers, there was an increase in knowledge of trauma-informed parenting, perceived self-efficacy in parenting a child who experienced trauma, and increased willingness to tolerate difficult child behaviors.
Jaime MC, Stocking M, Freire K, et. al.

Using a domestic and sexual violence prevention advocate to implement a dating violence prevention program with athletes.


A small trial of using a domestic violence/sexual violence prevention advocate vs. a coach to deliver the program “Coaching Boys into Men” found no significant differences in athlete attitudes and behaviors, which could increase the reach of this program.


Beliefs and ideologies linked with approval of corporal punishment: a content analysis of online comments.


After media coverage of a study linking corporal punishment with increased child aggression, 71% of online comments reflected approval of hitting children for disciplinary purposes: “I was spanked and I am okay”, spanking improves child behavior, spanking is more effective than other forms of discipline, and spanking is not abuse. Authors suggest messaging to the public be framed in a way that is highly sensitive to parents' needs to feel in control and to be effective when parenting.

Novak NL, Gerominus AT, Martinez-Cardoso AM.

Change in birth outcomes among infants born to Latina mothers after a major immigration raid.


In the Postville, Iowa ICE raid on a meat-processing plant in 2008, the largest raid to that date, 900 ICE agents using military tactics and Black Hawk helicopters arrested 389 employees, 98% of whom were Latinos. Arrestees were handcuffed, women sent to jail, and males were chained together in groups of 10 in a cattle fairground.

Researchers

Wade R Jr, Becker BD, Bevans KB, Ford DC, Forrest CB.

Development and Evaluation of a Short Adverse Childhood Experiences Measure.


Using data from 71,413 adults, a two-item ACE screener appropriate for rapid identification of adults who have experienced significant childhood adversity was developed that had no substantial difference in association with an array of health outcomes than a full 11 item screen. The two items kept were household alcohol and childhood emotional abuse.

Lauderdale DS.

Birth outcomes for Arabic-named women in California before and after September 11.

Demography. 2006 Feb;43(1):185-201. PMID: 16579214

“Arabic-named women who gave birth in California in the six months following September 2001 experienced a moderately increased risk of low birth weight and preterm birth compared with similar women who gave birth a year earlier. Other women in California did not experience worse birth outcomes after 9/11.”

Other of Interest

Park JH, Lee K, Hand MD, Anderson KA, Schleitwiler TE.
