

# ACElife: Research on the effects of adverse childhood experiences

EU-Promens 7.4.2025

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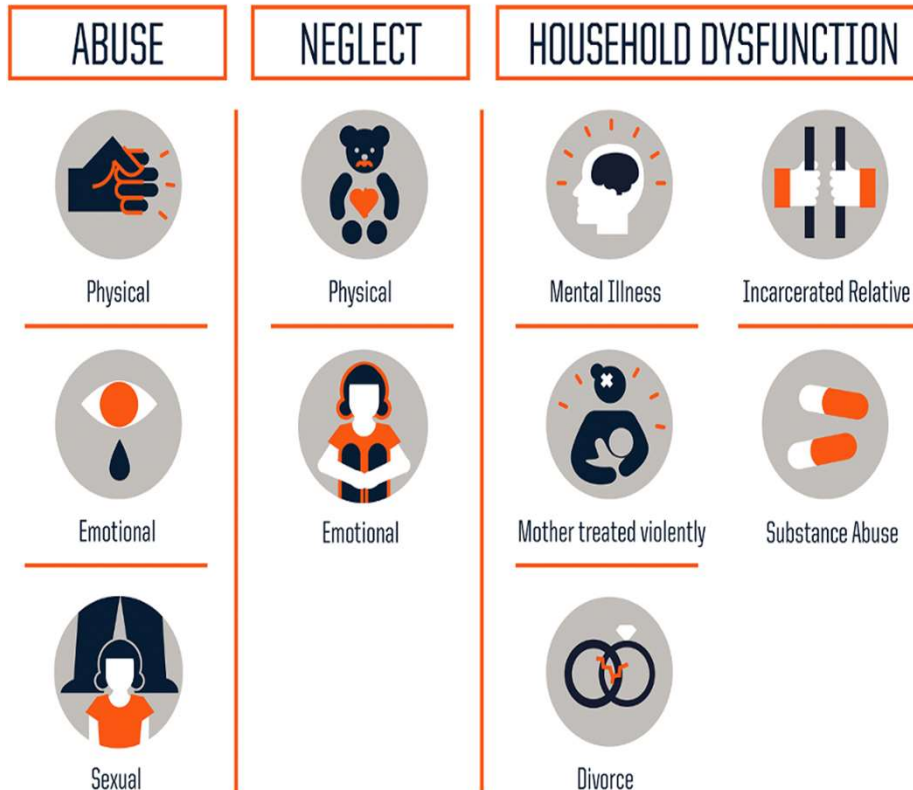


## ACElife

Ensure equal opportunities for children with adverse childhood experiences

- To explore the impact of adverse childhood experiences on later life using high quality research designs.
- To provide welfare regions, municipalities and third sector actors effective and efficient tools to work for the safety and well-being of children across different sectors of government.
- Better implementation of child participation and children's rights in general, both in research and in the design of practical services.





Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Hughes K, Bellis MA, Hardcastle KA, Sethi D, Butchart A, Mikton C, Jones L, Dunne MP. The effect of multiple adverse childhood experiences on health: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Lancet Public Health. 2017 Aug;2(8):e356-e366. doi: 10.1016/S2468-2667(17)30118-4. Epub 2017 Jul 31. PMID: 29253477

≥4 ACEs (compared to those, with no ACEs)

- 3-6 x risk for risky sexual behaviour, mental health problems and problems with alcohol.
- 7x risk for substance abuse and violent behaviour.

## Mental health problems

- ACEs experiences when related to parents.
- Outcome when related to child

# **Why ACEs cause problems? – potential mechanisms**

- Changes in health behaviour – for example drugs
- Learning by seeing
- (Over)sensitivity to danger / hostile attribution bias
  - Threshold for aggression is getting low, social relationships are rare / selection of social connections.
- Toxic stress
- Changes in actions of genes
- Epistemic mistrust: an inability to trust others as a source of knowledge about the world

# Economic burden of ACEs is huge

- In Europe, annual costs of ACEs are evaluated to be several percents of GDP. (Hughes ym., 2021)
- In USA, costs for health services are evaluated to be 14.1 trillion USD annually. (Peterson ym., 2023)



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Health and financial costs of adverse childhood experiences in 28 European countries: a systematic review and meta-analysis



Karen Hughes, Kat Ford, Mark A Bellis, Freya Glendinning, Emma Harrison, Jonathon Passmore



JAMA  
Network | **Open**



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Original Investigation | Public Health

Economic Burden of Health Conditions Associated With Adverse Childhood Experiences Among US Adults

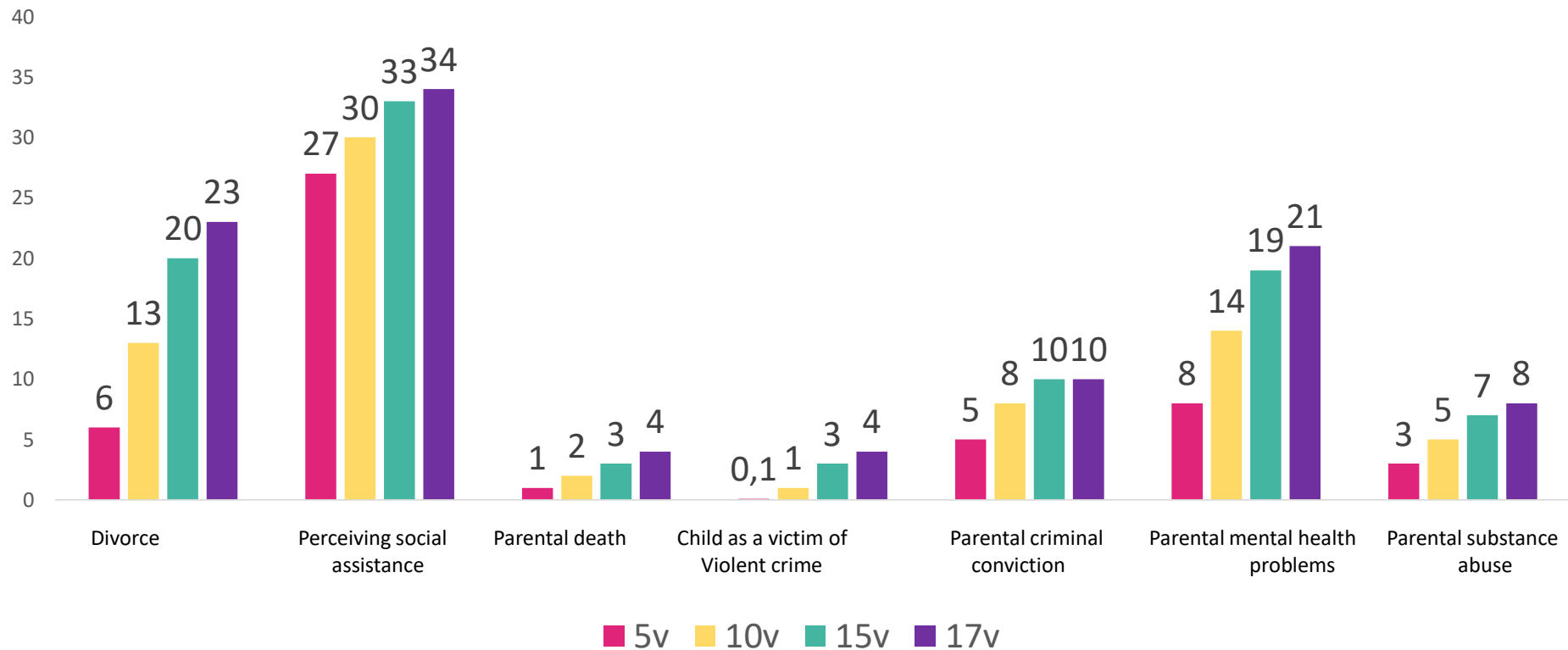
Cora Peterson, PhD; Maria V. Aslam, PhD; Phyllis H. Nolon, PhD; Sarah Bacon, PhD; Mark A. Bellis, PhD; James A. Mercy, PhD; Curtis Florence, PhD

# **Associations between ACEs and variety of outcomes**

## Register data

- Multicohort data representing the entire population of children born in Finland between 1987 and 2003 ( $n = 1,006,028$ ), followed until the end of the year during which they turn 17.
- The dataset included annual sociodemographic information for each child and their biological parents.
- Socioeconomic and criminal history data were derived from administrative registers maintained by Statistics Finland.
- Health-related data were obtained from the Care Register for Health Care, maintained by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare and classified according to versions 9 and 10 of the International Classification of Diseases and Causes of Death.
- The data structure was created by linking records from the registers using pseudonymized personal identification numbers

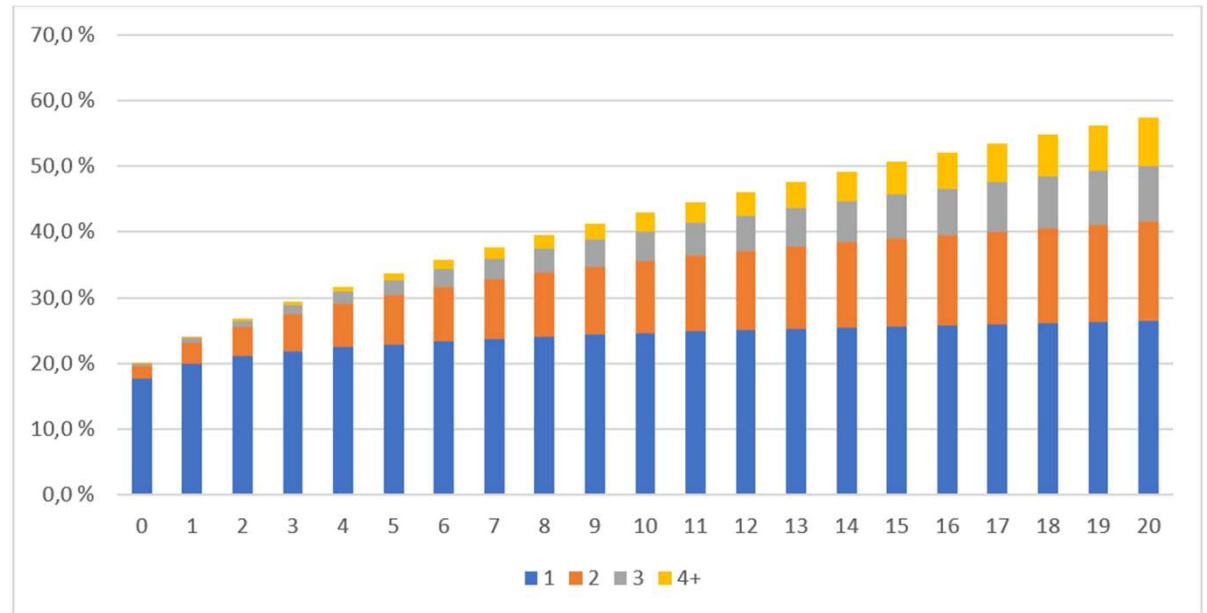
# Cumulative percentages of individual ACEs







## Cumulation of ACEs (1-4+) according to age



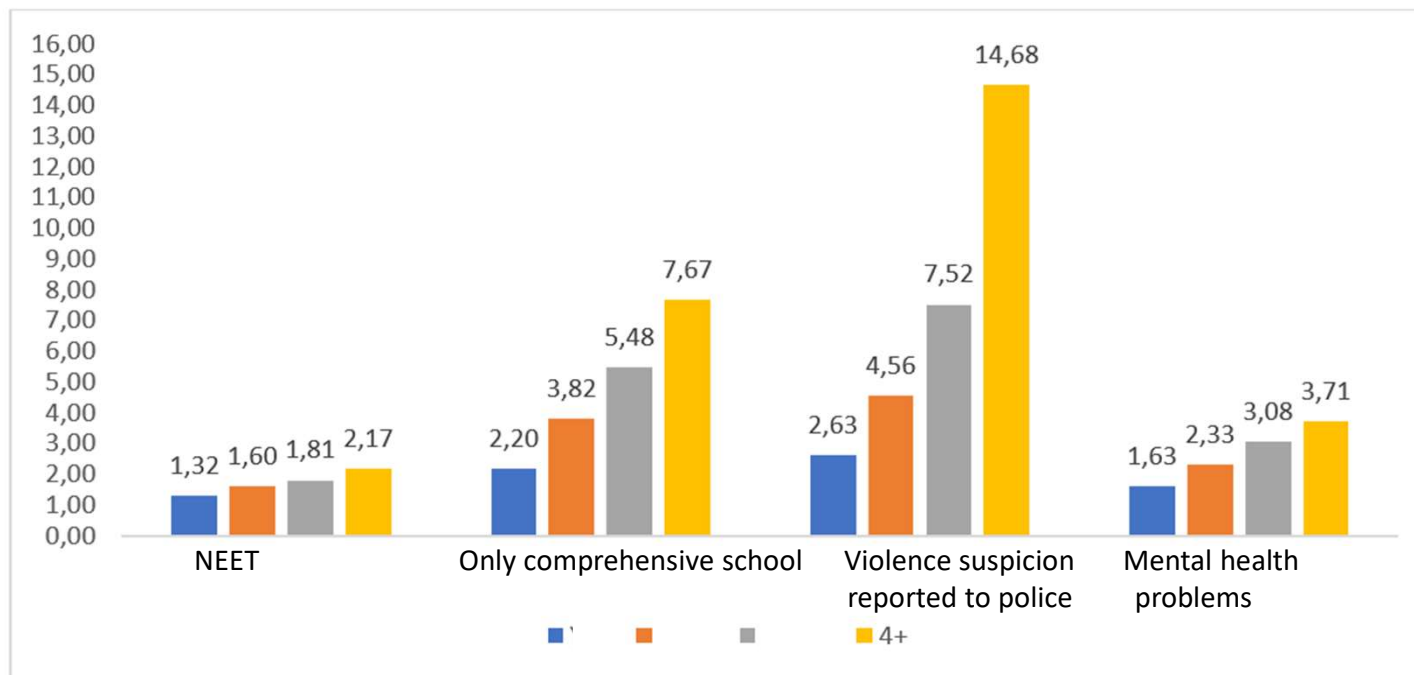
## ACEs often seen together

Low socioeconomic position and violence (both; parental conviction of violent crime and child as a victim of violent crime)

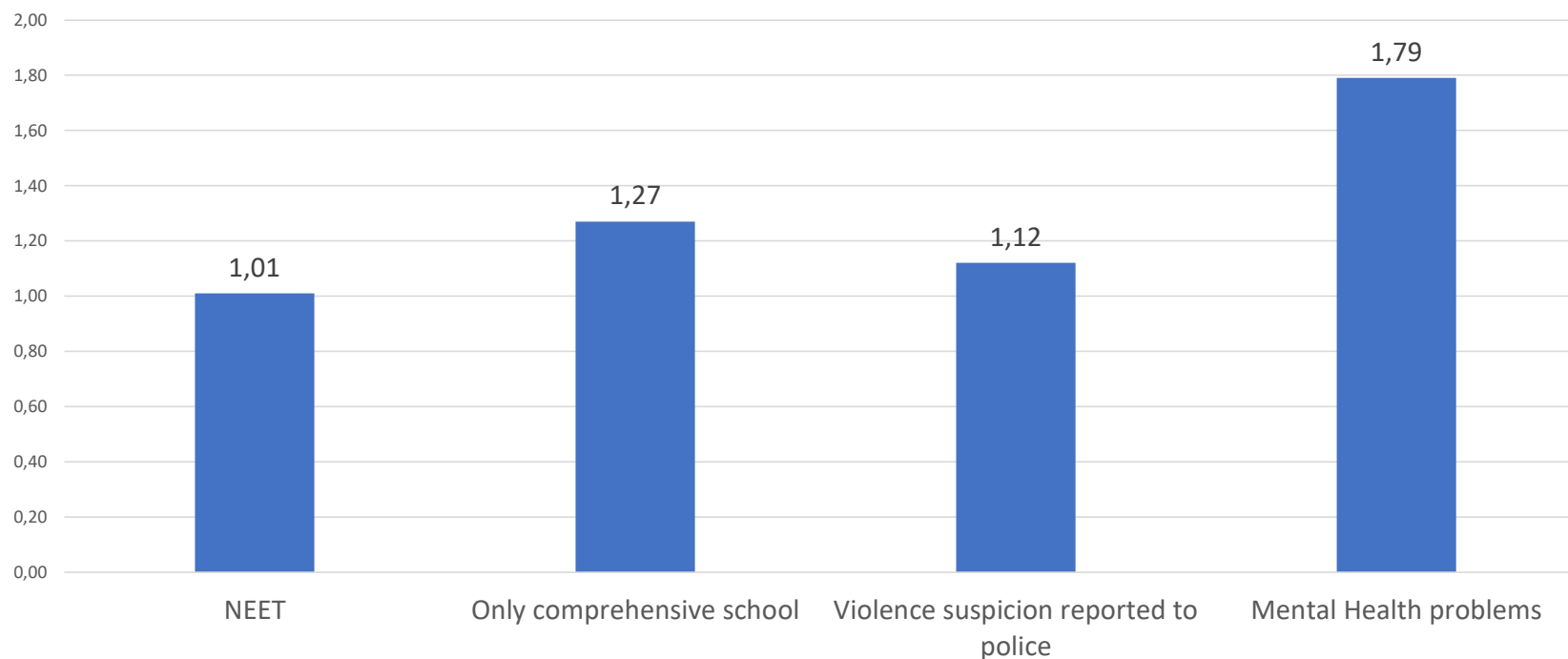
Parental mental health problems, parental substance abuse and parental self harm.



# Association between 1-4+ ACEs and different outcomes (ORs)



# Association between parental mental health problems and different outcomes (ORs)



## Early-life adversities and youth offending patterns (analysis in a process)

- We explain different type of criminal behaviour with individual ACEs and cumulative ACEs.
- Idea is to see, if ACEs predict particular type of criminal behaviour. ->Generalists versus specialists
- ACEs predict all types of criminal behaviour
- Associations between parental mental health problems and different types of crimes are very weak. Association is found only to drug-related offences.







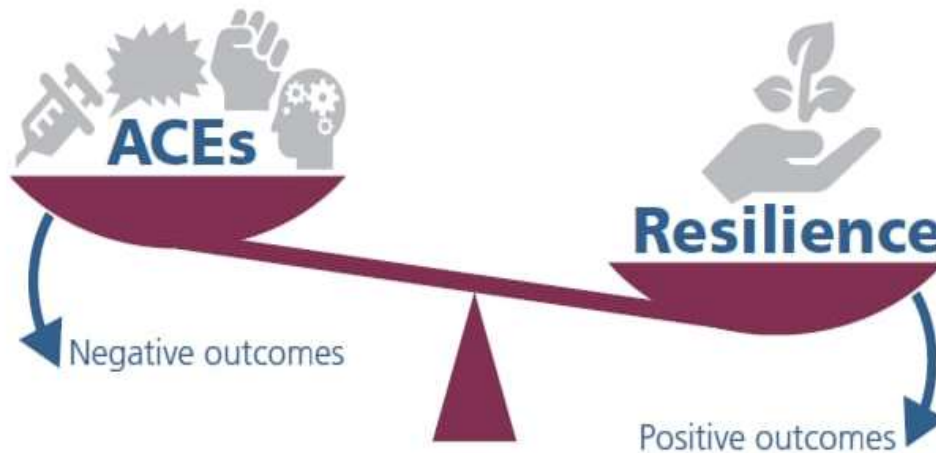
## **CHILDHOOD VICTIMISATION AND SUBSEQUENT INTERNALIZING AND EXTERNALIZING DISORDERS. A CO- SIBLING STUDY (study in process)**



- Childhood physical and sexual victimization are well-known risk factors for a wide range of psychiatric disorders.
- There are several suggestions of what is an actual mechanism between these.
- Previous research has also shown that the association might be partly due to confounding.
- With sibling-models we can test this assumption.
- According to our analysis association between childhood victimization and psychiatric disorders is partly explained by shared characteristics between siblings (genes and/or family environment), but there is also independent effect between victimization and psychiatric disorders.
- Association is stronger in a case of sexual victimization compared to other type of physical victimization.

# A systematic review of positive childhood experiences and adult outcomes: Promotive and protective processes for resilience in the context of childhood adversity

Deborah Han , Nathalie Dieujuste , Jenalee R. Doom , Angela J. Narayan 



## Protective factors

- Supportive relationships
- Sense of mastery
- Ability to solve problems
- Self regulation
- Self-efficacy
- Hope and optimism
- Caring family
- Schools supporting childrens participation
- Peer support
- Sense of belonging



Adapted from: Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University. See <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/resilience/>

# Thank you!

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