Analyzing Health Implications of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on American Adults

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Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) refer to traumatic childhood events like emotional, physical, and sexual abuse and other forms of household dysfunction. ACEs are associated with biomarkers for chronic diseases resulting in early mortality and increased morbidity. This study assesses the prevalence of ACEs and their socio-demographic correlates and evaluates the association between ACEs with self-reported general health statuses. This study used data from the recent 2019 Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System administered by the Center for Disease Control. Surveyed participants included 149,801 individuals from twenty-one states aged =18 years who completed the ACE module that inquired about risky behaviors, health conditions, and ACE exposures. Primary outcome measures were comorbidities and risk behaviors such as binge drinking, smoking, obesity, diabetes, coronary heart disease, and depression; ACE scores and individual ACE components such as physical abuse, emotional abuse, and parental separation were considered independent variables. Data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Multiple logistic regression models examined the relationship between ACE scores and comorbidities/risky behaviors and between individual ACE components and comorbidities/risky behaviors in adulthood. Overall, controlling for variates, 22.5% of participants reported at least one ACE, and 17.0% had experienced four or more. The study indicated that adults who experienced more ACEs were associated with increased odds for binge drinking, diabetes, heart disease, and depressive disorder. This research advocates for an escalation of preventative measures in health, education, and judicial departments to start the process of ending child maltreatment.

Awards Won:

American Statistical Association: Certificate of Honorable Mention