

Adverse Childhood Experiences Report - Summary

Introduction

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are potentially traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and wellbeing. These experiences range from physical, emotional, or sexual abuse to parental divorce or the incarceration of a parent or guardian.

Studies from USA

The first study was in the USA between 1995 and 1997. ACE scores were used to assess cumulative childhood stress with the study finding a graded dose-response relationship between ACEs and negative health and wellbeing outcomes throughout life. These covered health, mental health and education/work performance.

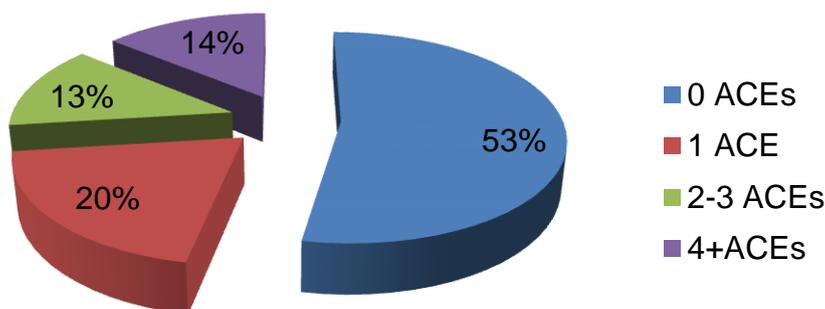
Welsh Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study 2015

More than 2,000 adults up to the age of 69 took part in the 2015 study in Wales, providing information on their exposure to ACEs before the age of 18 years and their health and lifestyles as adults.

Types of ACEs were recorded as follows

Child maltreatment	
Verbal abuse	23%
Physical abuse	17%
Sexual abuse	10%
Childhood household included	
Parental separation	20%
Domestic violence	16%
Mental illness	14%
Alcohol abuse	14%
Drug use	5%
Incarceration	5%

Number of ACEs recorded:



For every 100 adults in Wales 47 have suffered at least one ACE during their childhood.

ACEs increase individuals' risk of developing health harming behaviour, compared with people with no ACEs, those with 4+ are:

- 4 times more likely to be a high-risk drinker
- 6 times more likely to have had or caused unintended teenage pregnancy
- 6 times more likely to smoke e-cigarettes or tobacco
- 6 times more likely to have had sex under age of 16 years
- 11 times more likely to have smoked cannabis
- 14 times more likely to have been a victim of violence over the last 12 months
- 15 times more likely to have committed violence against another person in the last 12 months
- 16 times more likely to have used crack cocaine or heroin
- 20 times more likely to have been incarcerated at any point in their lifetime.

Preventing ACEs in future generations could reduce levels of all of these. The study lists a number of priorities for action one of these is the responsibility to act not just refer. Before an action can be taken though someone has to be able to recognise the risk.

The findings appear to provide some evidence for the Wellbeing and Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 with the focus on long-term, prevention, integration, collaboration and involvement.

ACEs cannot be removed completely from children's lives but they can be reduced and their impact managed. If changes can be made then more children can look forward to successful futures.

What is already happening?

The following was included in the report on what is already happening in Wales:

“Wales is already pioneering a range of national policies and programmes which aim to:

- Identify and intervene where children may already be victims of abuse, neglect or living in adverse childhood environments
- Better equip parents and care-givers with the necessary skills to avoid ACEs arising within the home environment and encourage development of social and emotional wellbeing and resilience in the child;
- Ensure that indirect harms from for instance domestic violence, substance misuse and other mental and behavioural problems in the family setting are identified, addressed and their impact on children minimised.”

(page 20)

Two of these national policies and programmes are: The Building a Brighter Future: Early Years and Childcare Plan 2013-2023 and the Healthy Child Wales programme

What do successful futures look like?

The focus is on the children of today to reduce the impact and number of ACEs that they encounter. The evidence suggests that this would lead to them having improved health and wellbeing outcomes as adults.

The four purposes are that all children and young people will be:

1. Ambitious, capable learners - who are ready to learn throughout their lives.
2. Enterprising, creative contributors - who are ready to play a full part in life and work.
3. Ethical, informed citizens - who are ready to be Citizens of Wales and the world
4. Healthy, confident individuals - who are ready to lead fulfilling lives as valued members of society.

(Identified at the APB Annual Conference 2016 by Dr Julie Bishop, Director of Health Improvement at Public Health Wales)

Further reading:

The Adverse Childhood Experience Report is available from

[http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PRIDDocs.nsf/7c21215d6d0c613e80256f490030c05a/d488a3852491bc1d80257f370038919e/\\$FILE/ACE%20Report%20FINAL%20\(E\).pdf](http://www2.nphs.wales.nhs.uk:8080/PRIDDocs.nsf/7c21215d6d0c613e80256f490030c05a/d488a3852491bc1d80257f370038919e/$FILE/ACE%20Report%20FINAL%20(E).pdf)