

The Influence of Adverse Childhood Experiences on Mental Health: A Review Study

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are a group of distressing and traumatic occurrences that occur during a person's early years, such as abuse, neglect, family problems, or violent interactions. Regardless of whether they occur throughout a person's developmental stage, these occurrences can have a long-term and negative impact on an individual's emotional well-being and general health. This study investigates the profound connection between early hardship and an individual's mental health. This scholarly review conducts a comprehensive examination of the objectives that support its research endeavour. In addition, this research will offer insight on the complex nature of ACEs and their significant influence on mental well-being consequences.

Design: The material for this study was gathered from a variety of secondary sources, including journals, book chapters, conference proceedings, and other online sites. The body of research has been thoroughly examined and summarized. It is also used to identify the research objectives and gaps in the field.

Findings: This meta-analysis investigates the multi-faceted connections between adverse childhood experiences and mental health. It underlines the critical need for interdisciplinary efforts to address ACEs and their effects on mental health, calling for early intervention and support networks to break the cycle of adversity and develop mental health resilience among affected persons.

Originality/Value: This study examines current literature and incorporates secondary data acquired from a variety of online resources, such as research journals, technical book chapters, conference papers, and a few websites. All the articles selected were recent, from respected publications, and pertinent to the planned task. A concerted effort is made to select a study topic and carry out the research.

Paper type: Review paper

Keywords: Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), mental health, childhood, trauma, resilience, emotional well-being

1. INTRODUCTION :

Mental health is a broad and multidimensional concept that encompasses various aspects of a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It is a feature of human life that transcends age, gender, culture, and social class, impacting people from every walk of life (Bhugra, et al. (2013). [1]). It is impossible to adequately convey the significance of mental health because it affects our experiences, connections, and capacity to solve issues and achieve goals in life, i.e., "no health without mental health" (Prince, et al. (2007). [2]). Mental health is impacted by many factors, such as demographics of people, quality of relationships with their families and friends, sleep pattern, the level of exercise, childhood experiences, parental aspects, etc. (Fredriksen, et al. (2023). [3]), (Sivolap, et al. 2016). [4]), (Alibudbud, R. (2023). [5]). Events from childhood can have a substantial effect on an individual's psychological well-being all their lives. (Weller, et al. (2022). [6]). Childhood is a foundational period in a person's life, shaping their physical, emotional, psychological, and social development. It lays the groundwork for future well-being, and as such, the study of childhood, especially childhood trauma, is of paramount importance. (Saracho. (2023). [7]). The study of childhood and childhood trauma is

essential because it has far-reaching implications for individuals, families, communities, and societies at large. By recognizing the importance of childhood and the impact of trauma during this critical period, we can develop effective strategies to prevent, identify, and treat childhood trauma, ultimately promoting healthier, happier, and more resilient individuals and communities.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are a subgroup of childhood problems introduced by academics Vincent Felitti, Robert Anda, and their colleagues in their major study conducted between 1995 and 1997 (Larkin, et al. (2014). [8]), (Felitti, et al. (1998). [9]). Several terrible events in a person's life that occurred before the age of eighteen and that the individual can recollect even though they are adulthood (Corso, P. S., et al. 2008). [10]). Adverse childhood experiences (ACE) include physical harm to the mind, sexual assault, the use of drugs, depressive disorders or other mental health problems in the immediate family, suicide in the relatives, imprisonment of a family member, violence on the mother by her partner, abuse of the parent's child by his partner, a parental figure separation and divorce, emotional abandonment, neglect of one's physical well-being, harassment, participation in verbal and physical fights, attack in the community at large, and collective assault (Lu, et al. (2008). [11]), (Boullier, et al. (2018). [12]), (Rariden, et al. (2021). [13]).

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have been shown to have long-term negative impacts on the psychological well-being of individuals (Rariden, et al. (2020). [14]). An individual's mental health may be affected for the rest of their life by these early experiences of trauma, which can include various forms of assault, being abandoned, and negligence from the family or any of the family members as well as household instability (Bomysoad. et al. (2020). [15]). Abuse of children is a result of a variety of health risk behaviours, such as abuse at home, depression, smoking, performing risky sexual behaviour, being pregnant unexpectedly, being overweight and obese, and consuming drugs or alcohol as teens or young adults. All of them will eventually cause a range of diseases and disabilities, some of which may finally result in mortality (Damodaran, et al. (2017). [16]). According to Someshwar and colleagues, these negative childhood experiences are associated with the development of various mental disorders in adults (Someshwar, et al. (2020). [17]). These traumatic events during childhood can not only affect a person's mental health but also have repercussions on their physical well-being and social life, as noted by Anda and Monnat (Anda, et al. (2007). [18]), (Monnat, et al. (2015). [19]). As stated by Al-Shawi (2015), an individual's interactions with family and friends have a substantial influence on their overall health and mental well-being. Establishing strong familial connections can play a significant role in maintaining physical health as people age (Al-Shawi, et al. (2015). [20]).

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHOLARLY REVIEW :

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can have a long-term and negative impact on an individual's psychological well-being and general health. Childhood traumas involve a wide range of disturbing or traumatic situations that occur to children, such as abuse, neglect, family troubles, or interactions with violence. Even if these experiences occur during a person's formative years, they can have a long-term influence on their emotional well-being. The study analysis delves into this critical intersection between childhood trauma and the psychological well-being of individuals. This academic evaluation investigates thoroughly the aims that support its research endeavour. This research will also provide insight into the multifaceted nature of ACEs and their major influence on well-being consequences. This article aims to give a comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of the primary objectives listed below.

- (1) To investigate the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences
- (2) To investigate the correlation between ACEs and mental well-being impacts.
- (3) To analyse the relationship between ACEs and psychological disorders
- (4) To analyse the relationship between ACEs and social and behavioural aspect
- (5) To analyse the relationship between ACEs and emotional wellbeing
- (6) To identify a research gap and search for opportunities to address the research gap
- (7) To evaluate the research agenda using ABCD analysis

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY :

As primary sources for this study, several internet databases were used, including Google Scholar, PsyNet, PubMed, Academia, SSRN, Research Gate, Z-Library, and other web-based resources. Over 10,000 publications from over 10,000 journals, some of which have been publishing papers for far longer than a century are included in these databases. There are three main steps in the evaluation

process. To make the search procedure easier, keywords were chosen at the beginning. Both whole keywords and separate keyword components can be used in this method. It is vital to remember that this article only uses full-text, peer-reviewed materials that are written in English. The articles go through a screening process before moving on to the following level. In this stage, a thorough assessment is carried out.

4. REVIEWS OF LITERATURE :

Addressing the complicated interaction between adverse childhood experiences and mental health consequences is critical in psychological research and social well-being (Mosley-Johnson, et al. (2019).[21]). The current study explores and attempts to carry out this literature evaluation to evaluate the numerous characteristics of ACEs and their ubiquitous impact on mental health. shedding light on both the scope of the problem and the long-term impact of ACEs, determining if these early-life adversities raise the likelihood of mental health disorders in adulthood, and investigating the long-term nature of these impacts. Throughout this study, we look at moderating factors such as psychiatric illnesses and emotional well-being to see if they may either reduce or add to the association between ACEs and mental health outcomes (Nelson, e al. (2020).[22]). We also hope to provide a more sophisticated understanding of how these early traumas affect a person's social relationships and behavioural complications. Ultimately, the purpose of this evidence review is to determine the relationship between ACEs and an individual's mental well-being, and thus how to improve a person's overall well-being.

4.1 Studies related to the prevalence of Adverse experiences from childhood

The abuse of children is widespread throughout the world. There has lately been a large body of evidence showing that child abuse is prevalent throughout India. The following table 1 examines the prevalence of ACEs worldwide giving a focus on the situation in India.

Table 1: Prevalence of Adverse experiences from childhood

| S. No. | Study Content | Summary of the Study | Reference |
|--------|--|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 | The Presence of Negative Childhood Experiences in American Adults Insights from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2011–2020. | Two-thirds of the population had at least one ACE, and one in every six had four or more. Women had the greatest rate of ACEs. | Swedo, et al. (2023). [23] |
| 2 | Providing Context for Adverse Childhood Experiences: Examining the Overlapping Effects of Personal and Community Hardships | Out of 13,267 youngsters evaluated, 61% and 73% had at least a single individual and 73% had at least one community ACE, whereas 15% had severe individual ACE exposure (3 ACEs) and 20% had severe (3) communal ACEs. | Warner, et al. (2023). [24] |
| 3 | Comprehending Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) and Their Connection to Adult Stress in Male Survivors of Childhood Sexual Abuse. | 487 adult men were studied, and the findings show that physical force, penetration, and physical harm, as well as the number of ACEs, were increasingly connected to the number of stressors in adulthood. | Easton, et al. (2012).[25] |
| 4 | Negative early experiences and addiction to drugs among Indian youth | Out of 9010 samples evaluated, one in every two individuals reported child maltreatment ACEs and family-level ACEs. With the exception being sexual abuse, males reported greater abuse and drug usage. | Fernandes, et al, (2021). [26] |

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| 5 | Review of Child and Adolescent Sexual Abuse and Violence in India | Sexual abuse and violence impact both male and female children, leading to distressing experiences. Statistics show that a significant percentage of boys and girls have reported unwanted physical contact, with a smaller but still notable percentage disclosing forced sexual encounters during their early years. | Malhotra, et al. (2010). [27] |
| 6 | Additional study on adverse childhood experiences is required to improve paediatric care in India. | Specific Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) such as abandonment, child labour, and street begging continue to be prevalent in India, but healthcare resources allocated to address ACEs remain generally low. Prioritising ACEs may result in significant long-term gains in paediatric and adult health. The importance of greater ACE identification through improved screening cannot be emphasised, since it plays a critical part in the nation's general well-being. | Kim, et al, (2021). [28] |
| 7 | Frequency and Spectrum of Adolescent Sexual Abuse in the Kerala Region of South India. | 36% of males and 35% of girls have suffered sexual assault at some point in their lives, according to the 1614 respondents (688 boys and 926 girls). Feelings of uneasiness and loneliness at home, dislike from parents, and depression were much higher among adolescents who had suffered sexual abuse than in those who had not. | Krishnakumar, et al. (2014). [29] |
| 8 | Impact on the physical, cognitive, and linguistic development of Indian children due to early childhood adversities, Insights from a longitudinal study. | The findings show that the main biological and interpersonal risk factors that affect Indian children's cognitive and linguistic development are hunger, hostile community environments, lack of formal schooling among family adults, domestic violence, and supportive family atmosphere. | Paul, et al. (2020). [30] |
| 9 | Health conditions of young adolescents and its relation to adverse childhood experiences. | By age 14, more than 90% of young people had experienced adverse childhood events. The connection between these events and health issues became more pronounced when individuals had two or more stressors, leading to somatic symptoms. Surprisingly, recent hardships emerged as a unique predictor of poor health, somatic problems, and overall health concerns. | Flaherty, et al. (2013). [31] |
| 10 | The Child Abuse Prevalence in Kerala, India | The annual occurrence of any type of abuse remained high at 89.9%, highlighting the widespread nature of child maltreatment, encompassing physical and emotional abuse. In all abuse categories, including sexual abuse, boys reported higher instances of abuse compared to girls. Abuse was more prevalent in nuclear families and families that acknowledged alcohol use. | Kumar, et al. (2019). [31] |

Child abuse is a widespread and deeply concerning issue that affects children all over the world, crossing geographical, social, and economic lines (Chamola, et al. (2023).[32]). Child abuse has developed as an urgent concern in the specific setting of India, a country recognised for its diverse culture, history, and socioeconomic inequality. In India, efforts are being made to raise awareness about

child abuse, improve reporting processes, and aid and protection to victims. According to data from the Ministry of Women and Child Development, two out of every three children in India are subjected to both physical and emotional abuse (Sarkar, et al. (2016).[34]). A high rate of negative childhood experiences (ACE) is a global issue, including in India. When compared to individuals who have not suffered sexual abuse, many youngsters face feelings of discomfort and isolation inside their households, as well as parental rejection and melancholy.

Various investigations have revealed an alarmingly high occurrence rate of ACE. Approximately two-at least one ACE, most of the studies find that 90% of persons have endured at least one form of abuse within their families or communities. Furthermore, a significant number of persons have had three or more ACEs, emphasising the severity and pervasiveness of this problem.

4.2 Studies related to the correlation between ACEs and mental well-being impacts:

In present-day society, the effects of traumatic childhood events are very prevalent. Our physical and emotional health are both being badly impacted by these interactions in numerous manners. Following is research that demonstrates how mental health has fared.

Table 2: Studies showing how ACEs affect the mental health outcome

| S. No. | Study Content | Summary of the Study | Reference |
|--------|---|--|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Childhood adverse experiences (ACEs) and their effects on mental health. | The findings point to a link between ACEs and the development of various mental disorders and symptoms later in life, the current study, nevertheless shows that mental diseases can result from specific types of childhood adversity as well as sophisticated interplays between various types of ACEs, involving both multifarious and convergent pathways. | Sheffler, et al. (2020). [35]. |
| 2 | Investigating how harmful childhood experiences affect adults' mental health. | Adversity experienced as a child hurts mental health in adulthood, increasing the risk of heavy to moderate drinking, drug use, depressive symptoms, and suicide attempts. Physical punishment as a kid was found to have a significant relationship with each of the self-reported mental health outcomes in the modified models. | Merrick, et al. (2017). [36] |
| 3 | An examination of a minority urban community in the US reveals the impact of traumatic childhood experiences on one's physical and mental health as well as their use of alcohol and other drugs in their early years of adulthood. | Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are associated with a greater chance of negative health-related effects in adulthood. Sexual efficiency is significantly impacted by results related to health, mental health, and substance use. can contribute to mortality and morbidity | Mersky, et al. (2013). [37] |
| 4 | Childhood adverse events (ACEs) and the development of mental health disorders in early adulthood: Concealed trends and violent community risk. | The results corroborated variations in young adult mental disorders based on the nature of ACE exposures. ACEs exert substantial influence on mental well-being outcomes, and there is an increasing interest in broadening the scope of ACEs beyond just domestic settings. | Lee, et al. (2020). [38] |

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| 5 | The long-lasting effects of adversity in childhood (ACE): Effects on some aspects of the community's psychological well-being. | The results suggest a link between ACEs and mental health problems, with a particularly strong correlation found in connection with DSM-V categories, which include depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorders, bipolar and related disorders, substance-related and addictive disorders, as well as neurodevelopmental disorders, for both males and females. | Dobson, et al. (2020). [39] |
| 6 | Unfavourable childhood experiences and health outcomes in people between the ages of 18 and 59. | Distinct ACE components exhibited distinct long-term implications on adult health outcomes, and ACEs during childhood were significantly connected with risky behaviours and poor health outcomes. | Chang, et al. 2019. [40] |
| 7 | The link between social-emotional abilities, adverse childhood experiences, and problematic behaviours in primary school-aged kids. | The results showed that the quantity of ACEs predicted every variation in social-emotional skills and nearly every variation in behavioural problems (98%) with little on age or gender on either model. Parents stated that their children showed lower social-emotional skills and a higher incidence of behavioural issues than those who had experienced fewer ACEs. | Ray, et al. (2020). [41]. |
| 8 | Adverse experiences in childhood and recurrent negative thoughts in later life: A comprehensive review. | Childhood encounters with abuse and neglect could potentially link to a proclivity for persistent negative thought patterns, like excessive worrying and dwelling on thoughts, during adulthood. Additionally, such rumination appears to be correlated with more adverse clinical consequences, including heightened psychiatric symptoms, depression, persistent low mood, thoughts of self-harm, cognitive difficulties, post-traumatic stress symptoms, and aggressive tendencies. | Mansueto, et al. 2021. [42] |
| 9 | Evidence from a five-decade prospective birth cohort links between bad experiences in childhood and adult mood issues | The findings suggest that children who experience ACEs face an increased likelihood of encountering mood-related issues in adulthood, underscoring the importance of proactive early intervention, regardless of the presence of mental health problems during childhood. | Selous, et al. (2020). [43] |
| 10 | Connections between adverse experiences in childhood, emotional turn, and alcohol-related issues in adulthood. | The relationship between childhood emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and alcohol-related issues was significantly mediated by psychological distress. This mediation has a detrimental effect on the person's general well-being. | Balistreri, et al. (2016). [44] |

Adverse childhood events, also known as ACEs, have been significantly linked in studies to a wide spectrum of mental health disorders. Adverse childhood experiences increase the likelihood that a child will have psychological problems later in life. Psychological distress has a substantial impact on emotional abuse, physical abuse, neglect, and alcohol-related issues throughout childhood and hurts a person's overall well-being in adulthood (Strine, et al. (2012). [45]). The occurrence of severe psychological disorders in adulthood, including those listed in the DSM-V like obsessive-compulsive

disorders, bipolar disorder, and related disorders, substance-related and addictive disorders, and neurodevelopmental disorders, has been documented in numerous studies (Schilling, et al. (2007). [46]). Furthermore, it is important to remember that these repercussions have an equal impact on both sexes. Multiple research studies additionally demonstrate that those with a history of ACEs are more likely to have poorer social-emotional abilities and behavioural issues in their teenage years and later (Zhang, et al. (2020). [47]). Additionally, there is a clear correlation between documented childhood maltreatment and dysfunctional households and decreased positive mental health, life satisfaction, psychological well-being, and social well-being (Crandall, et al. (2020). [48]). Additionally, it has been discovered that bad events and childhood traumas influence social abilities (Seitz, et al. (2021). [49]).

4.3 Studies showing the relationship between ACEs and psychological disorders:

Experiencing trauma has a significant and lasting impact on well-being across many functional domains. Here are a few ways that trauma impacts mental health and causes disorders like mental illness

Table 3: Studies showing the relationship between ACEs and psychological disorders

| S. No. | Study Content | Summary of the Study | Reference |
|--------|--|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | To evaluate the prevalence of ACEs, or negative childhood experiences, in schizophrenia individuals and a non-psychiatric control group. | The outcome demonstrates a high incidence of at least one ACE in people with schizophrenia, and several ACEs were linked to fewer symptoms of schizophrenia and prolonged auditory hallucinations in both sexes. | Prokopez, et al. (2020). [50] |
| 2 | The link between adverse childhood experiences and the severity, duration, and convergence symptoms in individuals dealing with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). | The present research was the initial study to provide evidence of a link between ACEs and comorbidity in OCD patients, but it additionally showed that there is no major connection between ACEs and OCD symptom intensity or recurrence | Visser, et al. (2014). [51] |
| 3 | Adversities experienced throughout childhood and psychiatric diseases | The findings show that unpleasant childhood events have a variable impact on bipolar disorder depending on the dose. A significant amount of early childhood adversity was present in 56% of cases of borderline personality disorder (BPD), 40% of instances of major depressive disorder (MDD), and 18% of cases of schizophrenia. Regardless of diagnosis, all patients had experienced significant emotional abuse. | Pietrek, et al. (2013). [52] |
| 4 | The connection between negative childhood experiences and later psychological wellness. | According to research, child maltreatment and familial violence are common, and they have a major influence on the victims' future mental health. There are strong links between certain ACEs and subsequent symptoms or diagnoses of depression and anxiety disorders. | De Venter, et al. (2013). [53] |
| 5 | Troubled childhoods in families where there are several people with psychiatric disorders | The study found that, when severe childhood maltreatment was present at home, men and those with obsessive-compulsive disorder and drug use disorders tended to develop significant psychiatric illnesses earlier than women did. | Someshwar, et al. (2020). [54] |

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| 6 | The findings of the 2016 Singapore Mental Health Study on food insufficiency, unfavourable childhood experiences, and mental health | There are strong correlations between lifelong mental problems and the prevalence of food product deficiency. The chance of food insufficiency was found to be greatly increased by bipolar disorder, generalised anxiety disorder, and suicidal behaviour. | Subramaniam, et al. (2023). [55] |
| 7 | The link between bad childhood experiences and frequent mental problems in HIV-positive pregnant mothers | Each sample reported having experienced four ACEs of sexual abuse. About 52% and 44% of respondents, respectively, mentioned having anxiety and depressive thoughts. This association was mostly caused by reports of sexual abuse. | Masiano, et al. (2023). [56] |
| 8 | A meta-analysis of the connection between childhood adversity and serious mental disease dissociation | The findings showed that having experienced childhood trauma was linked to a more severe case of dissociative disorder. Specific difficulties in childhood were also positively associated with dissociation, with pooled effect sizes in the small-to-moderate range. | Rafiq, et al. (2018). [57] |
| 9 | Childhood adverse experiences (ACE) and its relationship to revictimization and psychological and physiological comorbidity in outpatient services with anxiety and depressive disorders. | ACE (Adverse Childhood Experiences) frequently occur in instances of anxiety and depression. Higher scores are linked to post-traumatic stress disorder and the coexistence of mental health issues, but not bodily health issues. The presence of both general and sexual re-victimization is apparent. | Van der Feltz-Cornelis, et al. (2019). [58] |
| 10 | The correlations between accumulated negative Early memories, irritation, and mental health difficulties among male adolescents in custody | Three-quarters of the participants in the survey reported experiencing multiple ACEs. The cumulative ACE score successfully anticipated the likelihood of developing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety disorders, tendencies toward suicide, and depressive disorders. Increased irritability was notably associated with depressive disorders, suicidal tendencies, disruptive behaviour disorder (DBD), substance use disorder (SUD), and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). These connections remained significant in multivariate models. | Bielas, et al. (2016). [59] |

According to the research presented above, it is reasonable to believe that poor connections experienced as a child may have a substantial impact on psychological health and may precipitate the beginning of mental diseases. Abuse, neglect, inconsistent parental direction, and exposure to traumatic events are just a few examples of the many varied ways that these poisonous relationships can manifest. These traumatic experiences could eventually lead to serious mental health problems as an adult. Stress and anxiety brought on by ACEs and other traumatic events may change the neurobiology of the brain, which hinders psychological development (Andrews, et al. (2020). [60]). According to the papers we reviewed, traumatic childhood events may result in PTSD, anxiety disorders, depression, People with borderline personality disorder (BPD), dissociative disorders, obsessive-compulsive disease (OCD), and suicidal thoughts. It is crucial to highlight that not everybody who experiences negative childhood interactions will go on to acquire a mental illness. Instead, the emergence of such conditions is the consequence of an intricate combination of genetic, environmental, and social factors (Babenko, et al. (2015). [61]).

According to research by Knag and colleagues, young individuals between the ages of 18 and 25 had the highest rates of both major depressive disorders and generalised mental illnesses, as well as a higher incidence of adverse childhood experiences (Kang, et al. (2023). [62]), (Hughes, et al. (2016).[63]). Researchers typically utilise the ACEs' overall rating to illustrate the impact of accumulating risk factors on mental health. According to various research, the concept of ACEs should be expanded beyond household-level contexts to include community-level contexts to address a wider range of situations and populations (Holmes, et al. (2023). [64]).

4.4 Analysing the relationship between ACEs and social and behavioural aspects:

The traumatic events we had as children continue to have an impact on us at present on many different levels. The aftereffect, memory, or trauma may persist in our deeper mental areas and have a variety of behavioural impairments. These memories influence our social interactions in several ways.

Table 4: Studies showing the relationship between ACEs and social and behavioural aspect

| S. No. | Study Content | Summary of the Study | Reference |
|--------|--|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 | The Impact of Difficult Childhood Experiences (ACEs) on Child Behavioral Issues at KwaZulu Natal, South Africa. | There is an association between ACE exposure and later behavioural issues in children, indicating an early harmful impact of ACEs. This study provides evidence for an earlier link between ACEs and behavioural issues in children, which may be a factor in the mechanism through which subsequent health impacts develop. | Nazareth, et al. (2020). [65] |
| 2 | Investigating the Relationship Between Dangerous Health practises among teenagers and negative early experiences in New Hampshire | The findings revealed associations between engaging in health-risk behaviours and traumatic events going hungry, grade level, and lacking access to at least one trusted adult for social support. | Malik, et al. (2020). [66] |
| 3 | Study on the long-term impact of adverse childhood experiences on adult health behaviours and well-being in the United Kingdom | The relationship between negative childhood experiences and involvement in violent activities, early unplanned pregnancies, incarceration, and unemployment suggests a cyclical pattern, whereby people who have experienced more ACEs run a higher risk of passing those risks on to their own children. | Bellis, et al. (2014). [67] |
| 4 | The Frequency of Negative Childhood Events (ACEs) and How They Affect Individual's Satisfaction with Life | Among older adults, adverse childhood experiences were found to hurt happiness and life satisfaction. There is a progressively unfavourable relationship between increasing ACEs and one's level of life happiness. | Arunothong, et al. (2020). [68] |
| 5 | Fostering other-centeredness, communication skills, emotional expression, and managing interactions among adolescents with adverse childhood experiences (aces) via equine-assisted psychotherapy. | The outcome demonstrates how ACE has a moderating impact on alter centristm, expressiveness, communication poise, and interaction management. | Craig, et al. (2020). [69] |

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| 6 | Among a group of adolescent students, analysing the relationship between childhood negative events and self-esteem | Results revealed a moderate negative association between students' self-esteem and negative early experiences. | Osita Victor, et al. (2023). [70] |
| 7 | Examining the role of honesty, humility, and prosocial behaviour Chinese adolescents: adverse early-life experiences predicting prosocial behaviour negatively | Adolescents who experienced adverse early-life circumstances show lower levels of self-reported prosocial behaviour and perform less prosaically in a resource allocation task. Two main elements affect this connection, humility, dispositional trust, and honesty. | Wu, et al. (2020). [71] |
| 8 | The Impact of Challenging Childhood Experiences on the Utilization of Digital Media Among Children in the United States | When other characteristics were included, adolescents who had four or more unpleasant childhood experiences were shown to have a threefold larger chance of excessive digital media intake than young people who had not had any negative childhood events. | Jackson, et al, (2020). [72] |
| 9 | The Influence of Social Interactions on Children's Perceptions of Adversity | According to research, social ties that are sensitive, responsive, and supportive help children who have experienced early childhood adversity have better results. These social connections are typically thought of as moderators that protect kids from the effects of exposure to harmful events. | Smith, et al (2021). [73] |
| 10 | Investigating the Intermediary Role of Social Processes among Adverse Early life Experiences and Loneliness in Young Adults | In the event of emotional abuse, these correlations were at least partially mediated by perceived social support, social proximity, and unsupportive interactions with friends. The prevalence of loneliness among young adults, as well as the links to negative early life events, may influence assessments of safety, worth, and personal worth in social connections. | Landry, et al. (2022). [74] |

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) can have a long-term and profound impact on an individual's social life and behaviour. According to the findings of the preceding studies, poor childhood Individuals may develop several impairments because of their experiences. Bad childhood experiences in children can lead to behavioural disorders such as poor social relationships with peers, behaviour deviations in social settings, a lack of self-confidence, and a lack of interpersonal skills (Mesquita, et al. (2022). [75]). Some of the prevalent gestures of ACEs in teenagers' health risk behaviour include aggressive actions including anti-social behaviour, unwanted pregnancies, suicidal thoughts, and negative consequences on society (Mumford,et al. (2019). [76]). The long-term effects of ACEs in adulthood can be seen in a variety of domains. Ineffective communication and expressiveness, limit their social involvement, occupational performance as well as family ties (Cotter, et al. (2018). [77]).

ACE individuals who have undergone ACE may develop negative coping strategies such as substance abuse, self-destructive behaviour, or avoidance behaviours (Leban, et al. (2020). [78]). Those who have been misled or harmed by carers as children may find it difficult to trust and connect with others, making it difficult to form meaningful relationships (Zheng, et al. (2020). [79]). Later in life, this may make it difficult to form and maintain positive connections. Individuals who have had ACEs may experience difficulties with trust, intimacy, and emotional connection, as well as attachment disorders (Kesternich, et al. (2020). [80]). These approaches may have an impact on their ability to engage in healthy social interactions, as well as have other harmful implications. Some persons who have had ACEs may avoid

interactions with other people entirely. They may retreat due to fear, worry, or a lack of social skills, resulting to loneliness and social isolation (Rotenberg, et al.2010). [81]). Because of their fragility and difficulties recognising and avoiding harmful conditions, bullying, and other types of victimisations in their life, these survivors are at a higher risk of experiencing recurrent trauma or victimisation in adulthood (Hoover, et al. (2018). [82]).

4.5 Analysing the relationship between ACEs and emotional wellbeing:

Negative childhood experiences and well-being on an emotional level have a profound and multifaceted link. ACEs can have a severe and long-term impact on a person's emotional well-being, frequently resulting in a variety of emotional problems and problems with their mental health (Chainey, et al. (2021). [83]).

Table 5: Studies showing the relationship between ACEs and emotional wellbeing

| S. No. | Study Content | Summary of the Study | Reference |
|--------|---|--|------------------------------|
| 1 | Adolescent physical and emotional wellbeing after negative childhood experiences depends on preventive factors | According to the findings, the more traumatic events teenagers experience, the less likely they are likely to have a positive sense of emotional well-being. | Moore, et al. (2016). [84] |
| 2 | Evaluating the long-term impact of stress mechanisms on adult psychological well-being in relation to childhood traumas | The study reveals that toxic stressors early in life not only have developmental consequences but also increase the probability of further stressor chains and maladaptive stress management that can overwhelm individual resilience and interfere with healing and physical and mental wellness. | Nurius, et al. (2015). [85] |
| 3 | Studying the relationship between early childhood experiences and resilience in college students in China | The results of this study indicate that college students who experienced stressful events in their childhood have lower levels of resiliency. | Chen, et al. (2023). [86] |
| 4 | The importance of meaning in existence and meaning confusion as mediators of the influence of bad childhood experiences | Meaning in life regulates the association between ACEs and happiness, whereas meaning of life confusion mediates the relationship between ACEs and depression and anxiety. | Kwok, et al. (2023). [87] |
| 5 | Self-esteem determinants in teenagers with psychological referrals | In this study, self-esteem was adversely connected with self-identity confusion and positively related to a sense of belonging and involvement. | Akdemir, et al. (2016). [88] |
| 6 | The Effects of Childhood Neglect on the Expression of Genetic Potential, Insights into the Nature-Nurture Interaction | Because of the knock-on effects of an unfavourable early environment, the individual may be unkind to others. It is difficult to understand the anguish of others and to feel empathetic or compassionate. | Perry, et al. (2002). [89] |

| | | | |
|----|---|--|--------------------------------|
| 7 | Compassion and Negative Childhood Experiences | According to the study, poor childhood experiences impair adults' empathetic skills, and survivors of parent-to-child abuse endure further juvenile victimisation. | Antunes, et al. (2012). [90] |
| 8 | Juvenile abuse, teenage psychological well-being, and self-compassion among children and adolescents. | Increased incidences of childhood maltreatment, psychological neglect, and physical violence were linked with lower levels of feelings of self-compassion. Even after controlling for age and gender, domestic violence was shown to be associated with reduced compassion for oneself, even when the knock-on consequences of both emotional deprivation and physical harm were taken into consideration. | Tanaka, et al. (2011). [91] |
| 9 | Self-management, adaptability, and growth after adversity in childhood | Self-management, adaptability, and growth after adversity in childhood | Dykes, et al. (2016). [92] |
| 10 | Challenges in spirituality faced by ACE victims | Childhood trauma acts as an inverted spiritual encounter, with increased mental and emotional reactions and uncontrollable ideas that distort the child's key sense of identity and meaning. | Garbarino, et al. (1996). [93] |

According to the research described above, ACEs and emotional wellbeing are intricately linked, with ACEs typically having a significant impact on an individual's emotional health throughout their life. These traumatic experiences can cause a variety of emotional issues, including low self-esteem, impaired self-management, adaptability to the environment, and overall low resiliency. Impaired emotional wellness leads to poor quality in maintaining relationships, including family and professional interactions (Schütze, et al. (2020). [94]).

5. CURRENT STATUS & NEW RELATED ISSUES :

The connection involving adverse childhood experiences and serious psychological conditions like schizophrenia as well as mental health issues which include anxiety, depressive disorders, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) has been unambiguously demonstrated. Adverse childhood experiences can have a permanent impact on an individual's mental, emotional, and physical well-being. The findings from these studies emphasised how trauma experienced as a child might have a long-lasting impact. Society is becoming aware of the importance and connection underlying between ACEs and mental health. Refocusing their efforts on early diagnosis and intervention to lessen the effects of ACEs and other risk factors, many healthcare professionals, educators, and politicians have recently been working on this issue with great interest. We still need to conduct in-depth investigations and therapies, based on the severity and nature of the traumas (Alegría, et al. (2023). [95]).

The COVID-19 pandemic, which started in late 2019, posed new difficulties for young children's development and mental health. Lockdowns, school closings, and schedule changes might have made adverse childhood experiences worse or created new stressors for kids and families (Clemens, et al. (2022). [96]). As social media use and the spread of digital technologies grew concurrently with the epidemic, additional stressors and difficulties for kids' mental health may have emerged, potentially changing the terrain of Aces (Henke, et al. (2023). [97]). Increasingly painful childhood experiences could result from the frequency and severity of environmental catastrophes. Children harmed by these incidents may suffer severe negative psychological effects. A thorough analysis taking these issues into account and employing workable intervention strategies is crucial given the new concerns that emerged following the outbreak of the pandemic.

6. IDEAL SOLUTION, DESIRED STATUS & REQUIRED IMPROVEMENTS :

Set aside some time for going out. Childhood trauma can have a profound impact on an individual's mental and emotional health, as well as their physical health. Even though studies on the impacts of bad childhood experiences have been undertaken in many different nations, the community is still not completely aware of how potentially hazardous these issues are. Public awareness campaigns and

educational programmes addressing ACEs and their consequences should be developed from the bottom of society up (Kumari, et al. (2023). [98]). The most effective solution would be to raise awareness among parents, caretakers, educational institutions, and healthcare providers about ACEs and their consequences. Since prevention tends to be more effective than therapy, all forms of abuse should be monitored and strict legal action taken against the perpetrator. Putting in place long-term monitoring methods to track the mental health outcomes of people, and providing continuing support and resources to people impacted can also help to foster resilience and recovery (Mulvenna, et al. (2023). [99]). For researchers to have a thorough understanding of how adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) affect mental health in both victims and the responsible individual, an ideal approach would involve the effortless incorporation of multidisciplinary studies from the fields of psychology, sociology, neuroscience, and public health establishing laws and regulations to aid with ACE prevention and early intervention. This could include improving access to mental health services, enhancing child protection programmes, and providing social support to vulnerable families (Goff, et al. (2023). [100]).

To provide those who suffer from negative childhood experiences with a secure environment as well as the resources and care they need to survive, healthcare systems, educational institutions, and social service organisations should use an approach that considers trauma (Towfighi, et al. (2023). [101]). In addition, projects aiming at eliminating the stigma associated with ACEs and mental health issues should be implemented to facilitate the ability of individuals affected to seek help without feeling judged or discriminated against (Ofonedu, et al. (2023). [102]). Recognition at an early stage of ACE-risk children is preferable, as is making support available to them as well as their families at the same time. This support should help to mitigate the negative consequences of ACEs on their mental health. The objective on a long-term basis is to have a complete understanding of how various traumatic events like as abuse, neglect, and home dysfunction, influence mental health.

Expanded multidisciplinary partnership, over an extended period of longitudinal research, and making awareness-raising campaigns mandatory from the elementary school level to the wider community level needs to be done. Ensuring the availability of inexpensive and high-quality mental health care, particularly for underprivileged areas, and normalising the use of services related to mental health are both extremely important. Above all, policy reform programmes should target underlying problems such as inequality and a lack of opportunity (Wijayanti, et al. (2023). [103]), (Lorenc, et al. (2020). [104])

7. RESEARCH GAP :

Adversity experienced as a child hurts mental health in adulthood, increasing the risk of heavy to moderate drinking, drug use, depressive symptoms, and suicide attempts. In the adjusted models, being physically chastised as a kid demonstrated a significant relationship in terms of reported mental well-being results (Merrick, et al. (2017). [105]). Childhood encounters with abuse and neglect could potentially link to a proclivity for persistent negative thought patterns, like excessive worrying and dwelling on thoughts, during adulthood (Mansueto, et al. (2021). [106]). This finding highlights the importance of exploring the possible link between adverse childhood experiences and major risk factors for the leading causes of mental illness.

There are several scales to measure ACEs, Dube et al. (2004) found the test–retest reliability in the responses to questions about adverse childhood experiences and the resulting ACE score was found to be good and moderate to substantial (Dube, et al. (2004). [107]). However, according to Anda et al. (1999), no single ACE stood out consistently across various outcomes. An individual's response to the scale may not accurately reflect the choice and weightage of their experiences (Anda, et al. (1999). [108]). An individual's adverse experiences and the extent and severity of the experiences may vary, so the ACE questionnaire is not extrapolative of an individual's mental health and quality of life. More studies may be needed to produce a standardized scale to assess all aspects of ACEs, notably assault, sex abuse, verbal abuse, mental health problems in a home member, substance misuse in a household member, separation of parents, and witnessing abuse

Burkhart et al. (2022) [109] highlighted the importance of future research into protective factors such as parental support, positive school environments, tight-knit communities, and secure neighbourhoods, which could act as safeguards against the transmission of intergenerational adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) (Burkhart, et al. (2022). [109]). Furthermore, there is a necessity for more research on the effectiveness of certain adversity and resilience characteristics in predicting children's mental and physical well-being. Additional outcomes, such as parental stress, perceived social support, and

child development, should be studied in the context of trauma-informed two-generation medical models. Further research should focus on adversity-exposed kids with neurodevelopmental problems, as well as the discovery of predisposing and enabling variables that impact access to care and healthcare use.

8. RESEARCH AGENDA :

- (1) How common are Adverse Childhood Experiences?
- (2) Examine the various types of ACEs, and their cumulative impact on mental health outcomes
- (3) Initiate long-term, multi-generational studies to track the development of mental health issues in individuals with ACEs from childhood through adulthood.
- (4) Identifying Protective Factors and Resilience Strategies for Individuals with ACEs.
- (5) Develop and evaluate intervention programs aimed at enhancing the resilience of individuals exposed to ACEs.

9. ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH AGENDAS :

Understanding the prevalence of ACEs offers an overview of the magnitude of the problem and can be helpful in the identification of populations that are at greatest risk and places in which to provide concentrated treatments. Assessing the cumulative impact is of great importance because adverse childhood experiences (ACE) frequently occur in clusters, and their combined effect can be extremely detrimental to a person's psychological well-being. Knowing the cumulative impact makes it easier to identify the most important concerns to address and plan more focused treatments. Instead, then concentrating exclusively on weaknesses, a strengths-based approach to mental health assistance can help to move beyond knowledge and look for ways to come up with meaningful solutions. A comprehensive strategy, taken together, improves understanding and addresses the complicated link between ACEs and mental health. They give a road map for academics, policymakers, and clinicians to work together to avoid ACEs, mitigate their negative impact, and assist people of all ages in developing resilience and better mental health.

10. RESEARCH TOPIC :

The influence of adverse childhood experiences on mental health.

11. THE RESEARCH PROPOSAL'S ABCD ANALYSIS :

ABCD analysis is a powerful method with a high degree of subjectivity created by P. S. Aithal et al in 2015 that can be used to assess a variety of models and processes. ABCD stands for Advantages, Benefits, Constraints, and Disadvantages. It is a straightforward and scientific method for examining diverse models along with systems (Aithal, et al. (2015). [110]), (Aithal, et al. (2016). [111]), (Aithal, et al. (2015). [112]).

Advantage: Investigating the impact of adversity in childhood on one's mental well-being provides several benefits which range from early intervention and prevention to better policies and outcomes. It underlines the need to deal with childhood trauma to improve one's mental health and well-being throughout one's life (Banyard, et al. (2017). [113]).

Benefits: Its study provides numerous benefits, ranging from increased understanding and early intervention to stigma reduction and cost savings. It is extremely important for enhancing mental health and developing a more compassionate and informed community. Collaboration across several disciplines is a necessary for overall wellbeing of a person, including psychology, sociology, public health, and education. This promotes a thorough understanding of the situation and may lead to creative solutions.

Constraints: Conducting ACE research frequently entails sensitive and potentially unpleasant information about people's prior experiences. Researchers must traverse ethical quandaries about informed permission, the confidentiality of participants, and minimising harm to vulnerable groups, notably children (Card, et al. (2023). [114]).

Disadvantages: Many studies on negative childhood events rely on self-reporting in hindsight, which may be subject to recall bias. Participants may have difficulty recalling and reporting earlier stressful experiences, resulting in data errors (Mestermann, et al. (2023). [115]). The conclusions of the ACEs research may not be universally applicable. The effect of bad occurrences can vary widely based on cultural, socioeconomic, and individual differences, making generalisation impossible.

12. SUGGESTIONS TO IMPLEMENT RESEARCH ACTIVITIES :

Implementing research on negative childhood experiences (ACEs) on psychological well-being requires careful planning and execution. Considering the wide-ranging nature of the subject, it is vital to clearly define the research questions and objectives. The scope of the research, as well as the components of ACEs and mental health to be studied, must be outlined. It is also necessary to seek ethical approval from relevant institutional review boards (IRBs) or ethics committees. The use of a multidisciplinary approach to tackling ACEs and mental well-being concerns will allow the researcher to gather more information. Involve the community and stakeholders to establish confidence and ensure that the study is culturally appropriate and relevant. Evaluate and examine the success of your research initiatives regularly, making changes as appropriate is also helpful.

13. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY :

The study of how adversity in childhood (ACEs) affects mental health is important, but it has significant drawbacks. One key concern is recalling bias, which occurs when people fail to correctly recall and report prior unpleasant events, potentially leading to data mistakes. Because of the varied influence of ACEs across diverse cultural, societal, and individual settings, generalizability is a challenge. When dealing with sensitive data, ethical quandaries occur, necessitating careful consideration of informed consent and participant well-being. Because not everyone confesses their traumatic experiences, and government records may not capture all incidents, access to complete adverse childhood experiences data might be limited. These limitations highlight the subject's complexities and the importance of cautious interpretation and implementation of study findings concerning ACEs and mental health.

14. CONCLUSIONS :

This research essay explores the multifaceted and important topic of the effect of negative childhood experiences (ACEs) on a person's psychological well-being. Our research has revealed the tremendous influence that early life adversity may have on psychological well-being, emphasising the need to understand and treat the complexities of this connection. We learned from a thorough examination of research findings and existing literature that the negative experiences we had as children have an impact on many aspects of human life, particularly social, behavioural, and emotional well-being, and they can also contribute to the onset of a wide range of psychological disorders. Despite the constraints in the form of ethical dilemmas and potential bias in recalling trauma experiences, the evidence strongly supports the importance of ACEs as a critical driver of mental health outcomes. The study's findings should catalyse positive change, and we urge policymakers, healthcare providers, educators, and society to heed the call to action and prioritise our children's well-being, ensuring that every child grows up in a learning environment that fosters resilience and mental well-being.

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