



TITLE: Prevalence of adverse childhood experiences and their relationship to mental and physical illnesses in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are widely prevalent and interrelated. They affect multiple domains of health while having a dose–response effect. These effects are biologically plausible, where ACEs are found to be highly associated with physical and mental comorbidities. **Objectives:** to measure the magnitude of ACE and its relationship to mental and physical illnesses in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia by assessing its prevalence. **Material and methods:** A retrospective cohort study that took place in the Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia in 2020. ACEs were evaluated using the Adverse Childhood Experiences International Questionnaire (ACE-IQ) while screening for physical and mental symptoms was done through using the health appraisal questionnaire developed by the CDC. **Setting:** It was applied to a population-based, random adult sample from both genders, different educational levels and socioeconomic statuses. **Participants:** Those who were 19 years old and above and living in the Eastern region were included. **Results:** The total sample size was 611 respondents. After applying the exclusion criteria, 507 respondents were included. Most participants were females (65.1%).

The mean age of the participants was 29.7 years, with a standard deviation of 11.2 years. Most study respondents (81.8%) were exposed to four or more types of ACEs, with emotional neglect being the most common type (82.2%). Having four or more ACEs increases the risk of having physical illnesses compared to those with only one. Furthermore, female respondents who had four or more ACEs had the highest likelihood of having depressed mood (Adjusted odds ratio [AOR] = 1.04; 95% CI = 1.0–1.07), stress (AOR = 2.8; 95% CI = 1.11–7.3), and insomnia (AOR = 1.04, 95% CI = 1.01–1.07). **Conclusion:** In the Eastern Region of KSA, ACEs are highly prevalent and are associated with an increased risk of mental and physical illness.



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BIOGRAPHY

Dr Dalal AlEidi has completed her MBBS with honor from Imam Abdulrahman bin Faisal University, KSA. She is currently a psychiatry resident under the Saudi Commission for Health Specialties program, at King Fahd Hospital of the University (KFHU), KSA. Since 2021, she has been a member in Nafs; a platform that develops members ideas related to psychiatry into new programs. She is also a member of the journal club at KFHU.



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