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## **Adverse Childhood Experiences in Relation to Substance abuse and the Moderating Role**

Sydni Davila

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**Adverse Childhood Experiences in Relation to Substance abuse and the Moderating Role  
of Antisocial Traits**

Sydni Davila, Elizabeth Goncy Ph.D.

Psychology, Cleveland State University

**Abstract**

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) can lead to numerous negative outcomes such as higher rates of antisocial traits, substance use and abuse, and other health risk behaviors. Health risk behaviors make up a substantial portion of deaths in the United States so targeting these behaviors can significantly reduce the amount of people impacted by such behaviors. This study poses that increased exposure to ACEs and higher scores on antisocial measures will leave an individual at higher risk of substance abuse. This study was conducted using secondary data analysis from a national sample of young adults. A survey was conducted through Qualtrics that provided a total data set of 359 participants (ranging from 18-30) with a mean age of 25 years. In this population, 55.9% of participants were women, 27.8% made between \$20,000 and \$49,999 annually, and 47.1% identifying as non-White. There was a non-significant, negative correlation between scores on antisocial scales and ACEs. However, there was a significant correlation between ACEs and scores of problematic drug use, and between problematic alcohol use and antisocial personality traits. We can conclude that ACEs relate to illicit drug use but not problematic alcohol use. Further, antisocial personality traits are related to problematic alcohol use but not illicit drug use. By targeting at-risk populations, the premature death rate caused by adverse childhood experiences can be lowered.