

## **How common is exposure to traumatic social and family experiences, and how does it affect US children?**

Christina Bethell of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and coauthors assessed the prevalence of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) among US children, including exposure to violence, extreme economic hardship, family discord, and mental health and substance abuse problems. The authors write that nearly one-half of US children had encountered at least one of nine types of adverse experiences. Over 22 percent (or one in five) had two or more such experiences; these children were more than twice as likely to have a chronic condition and special health care needs, and were over 2.5 times more likely to have repeated a grade in school.

However, the authors also found that children who learned some resiliency skills—such as the capacity to usually or always stay calm and in control when faced with a challenge—had mitigated negative effects, including being much more likely to be engaged in school. The authors find that children receiving care in a family-centered medical home were more likely to demonstrate key aspects of resilience even when they were exposed to higher numbers of adverse childhood experiences.

<http://healthaffairs.org/blog/2014/12/08/childrens-health-health-affairs-december-issue/>