Prevalence of Severe Childhood Trauma Among Individuals with Concurrent Disorders

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Background

- Concurrent disorders (CDs) are co-occurrences of mental and substance use disorders and are highly prevalent among people with severe mental illnesses.
- Childhood trauma is also disproportionately represented among individuals with concurrent disorders, contributing to the severity and early onset of psychiatric and substance use disorders[1,2].
- There is little research specifically in tertiary care settings examining the severity of childhood trauma among those with concurrent disorders.

Objectives

To examine the variation in childhood trauma severity and identify sociodemographic variables that could contribute to trauma experiences among people with concurrent disorders.

Methods

- *n* = 354 (age *M* = 36.3, *SD* = 10.7, 33.3% male, 56.2% Caucasian) from 3 concurrent disorder treatment facilities in British Columbia recruited from the first session of the Reducing Overdose and Relapse: Concurrent Attention to Neuropsychiatric Ailments and Drug Addiction (ROAR CANADA) study[3].
- Trauma measured with the Childhood Trauma Questionnaire (CTQ)[4] – 6 categories: physical abuse and neglect, emotional abuse and neglect, sexual abuse, and denial/minimization of trauma.
- Trauma severity scored with Bernstein and Fink's (1998) CTQ scoring procedure[4].
- Demographic questionnaire (age, sex, ethnicity, SES, etc.), Maudsley Addiction Profile (MAP) (substance use, social/physical health, risky behaviour)[5], and an overdose assessment (frequency of/exposure to overdoses) measured potential trauma mediators.

Results

- Childhood trauma was found to be severe and prevalent.
- 58.2% of participants reported at least one type of severe trauma.
- Emotional abuse the most prevalent type of severe trauma

Figure 1. *Severity variation for the CTQ's 5 trauma subscales.*

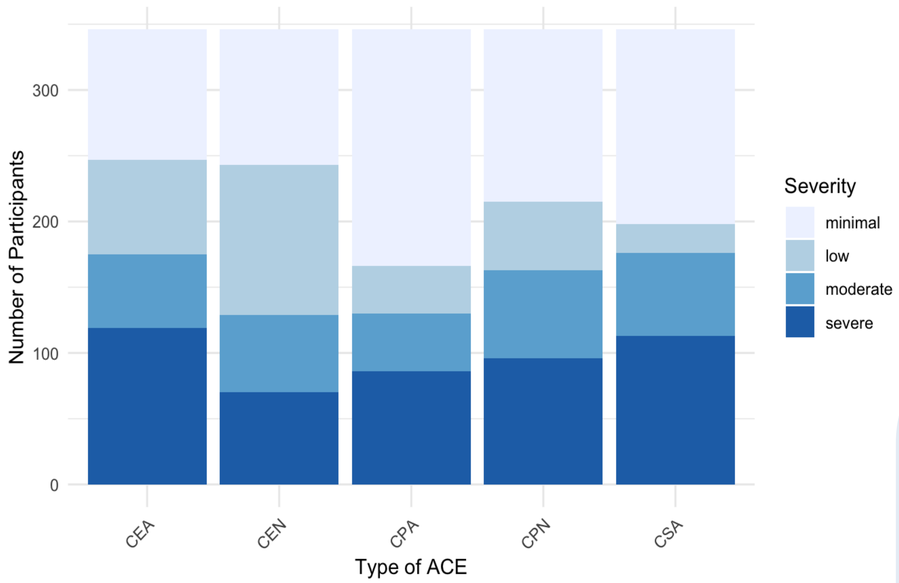
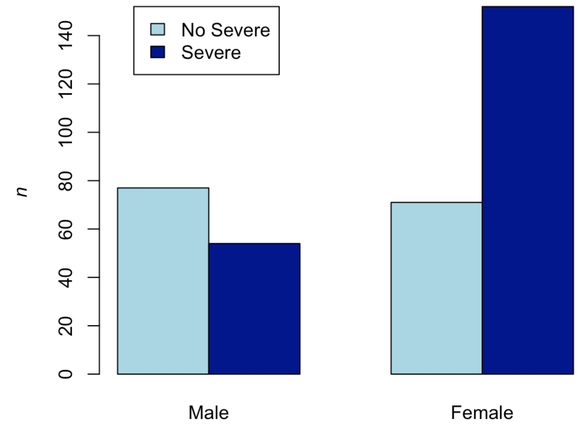


Table 1. *Mean and standard deviation of CTQ scores, classification of mean score based on the CTQ scoring procedure, and the prevalence of severe scores.*

Subscale	Mean	Standard Deviation	Classification	Prevalence of Severe Scores
Emotional Abuse	13.09	5.95	Moderate	34.18
Physical Abuse	9.33	5.02	Low	24.29
Emotional Neglect	12.73	5.33	Low	19.77
Physical Neglect	10.18	4.64	Moderate	27.68
Sexual Abuse	10.38	6.38	Moderate	31.92

- Women/biological females, Indigenous peoples, queer peoples, those who grew up apart from biological parents, and those whose parents received less than high school education were more likely to have experienced severe trauma.
- Current SES, histories of substance use/psychiatric illness, social/physical health, risky behaviour, and overdose activity were not related to trauma severity.

Figure 2. *Distribution of severe CTQ scores between males and females, $\chi^2(1, 354) = 23.52$, $p < .001$, $\phi = 0.26$. (See below for other figures).*



Conclusions & Future Directions

- Supports literature identifying high prevalence of trauma among concurrent disorders.
- Severe childhood trauma is common and serves as a health concern for this population.
- Certain sociodemographic variable predispose individuals to severe instances of childhood trauma.
- **Limitations**: recall bias and reporting errors, representativeness of the sample, and external validity of the measures.
- **Future Directions**
  - Compare results to a healthy control sample and a sample of people with individual disorders.
  - Continue development of trauma informed treatment for sociodemographic mediators and early trauma interventions for at risk children.

References & Other Figures

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