

# **Childhood adversity increases risk of psychotic experiences in patients with substance use disorder**

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## **Abstract**

**Introduction:** Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) increase the risk of psychotic experiences (PE), but little is known about heterogeneities of this association in different developmental stages, dimensions, or whether they are affected by substance use disorder (SUD). This study examines the association between different types of ACEs at various developmental stages and lifetime PE in patients with SUD in Chile. **Methods:** We included 399 consenting adults in outpatient or residential SUD treatment programs. Sociodemographic data and information about PE and ACEs were obtained by trained clinical psychologists. **Results:** Patients reporting PE experienced more ACEs compared to patients without PE (4.2 versus 3.4). They also experienced more complex adversities (41.8% versus 25.1%), had more psychiatric comorbidities (85% versus 70.4%), and reported using more substances (mean 4.5 versus 3.9). Adjusted association between ACEs and PE showed the highest OR for arrests (1.88), sexual abuse (1.81), alcohol abuse by parents (1.48), school exclusion (1.39), foster or residential care (18.3). **Conclusion:** Early exposure to ACEs is a risk factor for later PE among patients with SUD. Type of ACE and the period when they occurred is important, suggesting the existence of critical periods where the individual is more susceptible to adverse environmental stimuli.

## **Keywords**

Adverse childhood experiences, Psychotic experiences, Substance related disorders, Cumulative risk.