

#223 Jeremy Levit

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### **Childhood adversity and psychotic experiences among ethnic minorities with schizophrenia**

The present study is situated within a growing body of work exploring the role of childhood trauma in the development and manifestation of psychotic illness. Although elevated rates of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are consistently observed in patients with schizophrenia, little is known about the impact of trauma on the clinical presentation of psychosis. Utilizing data on participants from ethnic minority groups who are underrepresented in existing research, yet disproportionately affected by psychotic illness and ACEs, we sought to characterize ACE exposures and their relationship to positive symptoms in schizophrenia. The sample comprised 90 schizophrenia cases and 240 non-psychotic controls, matched by ethnicity, age, and gender. Relative to controls, cases had significantly greater exposure to physical, emotional, and sexual abuse, as well as neglect, witnessing domestic violence, and household member incarceration. Symptomatic associations with ACEs appeared to be gender-specific, with hallucinatory symptoms corresponding to a number of distinct ACEs in females, but not males. For instance, female cases exposed to physical or sexual abuse more commonly experienced third person auditory hallucinations. Further, linear regression revealed increasing ACE score corresponded to the number of hallucinatory symptoms in women. For male cases, increasing ACE score predicted delusions of influence. Among all participants with schizophrenia, individual ACEs and ACE score correlated strongly with thought broadcasting, the belief that others have access to one's thoughts. Our findings highlight the devastating prevalence of childhood traumas among individuals with schizophrenia, and support the notion that certain psychotic experiences more commonly arise in the wake of ACEs. Our work further underscores the need to identify and address trauma among patients with schizophrenia, who's traumatization often goes overlooked and may be masked by psychotic symptoms.

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