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Adverse childhood experiences and their consequences for children and adolescents

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In the last decades researchers have been starting to understand the magnitude and impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on human development. This has led to changes in the public awareness, as for example child maltreatment is considered a major public health issue. In this talk the magnitude of the problem, consequences and underlying mechanisms will be presented, based on international research and representative studies from Germany.

Meta-analysis on the prevalence of child maltreatment underline the importance of the problem. In a recent representative survey in German, 2.6% reported severe emotional, 3.3% severe physical, 2.3% severe sexual abuse, 7.1% severe emotional and 9% severe physical neglect. End of the year 2017 data on the prevalence of ACEs in the German population will be available and presented in this talk.

The consequences of ACEs are diverse, including behavioral and emotional problems as well as somatic disorders. Results from a representative study will be presented, indicating a dose-response relationship between ACEs and a large variety of health problems. To better understand the consequences of ACEs, the ACE pyramid provides a framework of the mechanisms by which ACEs influence health and wellbeing throughout the lifespan.

Learning Objectives:

Learn about the magnitude of Adverse Childhood Experience in Germany and worldwide.

Recognize the individual and societal consequences of Adverse Childhood Experiences.

Summarize underlying mechanisms by which health and wellbeing are impacted by Adverse Childhood Experiences.