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Trauma exposure and post-traumatic stress disorder among youth in a high-risk family study: Associations with maternal and paternal alcohol use disorder

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Abstract

This study presents findings regarding the prevalence of trauma exposure and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) based on discrete types of trauma (physical, sexual, witnessed violence, and non-assaultive trauma) among 3404 youth in a family study of Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). Data from the Collaborative Study on the Genetics of Alcoholism (COGA) were used to examine associations of parent AUD with offspring's childhood trauma exposure, and with lifetime diagnosis of DSM-IV PTSD among White and Black participants aged 12-35.

Of 3404 youth, 59.7% had parents affected by AUD and 78% experienced ≤1 traumatic event before age 18. AUD in one or both parents was associated with physical, sexual, and witnessed violence among Whites. Among African Americans, maternal AUD was associated with sexual assault. The lifetime PTSD rate among youth exposed to childhood trauma was 8.6%, and mother-only AUD was significantly associated with lifetime PTSD among participants in both groups. PTSD among youth in this study were somewhat higher (7.9% to 8.83%) than those found in general population studies of the same demographic (5% to 6.8%). Maternal AUD appears to be a salient risk factor for sexual assault before age 18 among Black and development of lifetime PTSD among White youth.

Keywords:

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) | childhood trauma | COGA | posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) | parental alcohol abuse

Acknowledgments

The Collaborative Study on the Genetics of Alcoholism (COGA), Principal Investigators B. Porjesz, V. Hesselbrock, H. Edenberg, L. Bierut, includes eleven different centers: University of Connecticut (V. Hesselbrock); Indiana University (H.J. Edenberg, J. Nurnberger Jr., T. Foroud); University of Iowa (S. Kuperman, J. Kramer); SUNY Downstate (B. Porjesz); Washington University in St. Louis (L. Bierut, J. Rice, K. Bucholz, A. Agrawal); University of California at San Diego (M. Schuckit); Rutgers University (J. Tischfield, A. Brooks); University of Pennsylvania (L. Almasy), Virginia Commonwealth University (D. Dick), Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai (A. Goate), and Howard University (R. Taylor). Other COGA collaborators include: L. Bauer (University of Connecticut); J. McClintick, L. Wetherill, X. Xuei, Y. Liu, D. Lai, S. O'Connor, M. Plawecki, S. Lourens (Indiana University); G. Chan (University of Iowa; University of Connecticut); J. Meyers, D. Chorlian, C. Kamarajan, A. Pandey, J. Zhang (SUNY Downstate); J.-C. Wang, M. Kapoor, S. Bertelsen (Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai); A. Anokhin, V. McCutcheon, S. Saccone (Washington University); J. Salvatore, F. Aliev, B. Cho (Virginia Commonwealth University); and Mark Kos (University of Texas Rio Grande Valley). A. Parsian and M. Reilly are the NIAAA Staff Collaborators.

We continue to be inspired by our memories of Henri Begleiter and Theodore Reich, founding PI and Co-PI of COGA, and also owe a debt of gratitude to other past organizers of COGA, including Ting-Kai Li, P. Michael Conneally, Raymond Crowe, and Wendy Reich, for their critical contributions. This national collaborative study is supported by NIH Grant U10AA008401 from the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).

Disclosure of interest

All authors declare that they have no conflicts to report.

Ethical standards and informed consent

All procedures followed were in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible committee on human experimentation [institutional and national] and with the Helsinki Declaration of 1975, as revised in 2000. Informed consent [for adults] and assent [for minors] was obtained from all participants involved in this study.

Additional information

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