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Multivariate analysis of 1.5 million people identifies genetic associations with traits related to self-regulation and addiction

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1 **Title: Multivariate genomic analysis of 1.5 million people identifies genes**
2 **related to addiction, antisocial behavior, and health**

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2

3 **Abstract**

4 Behaviors and disorders related to self-regulation, such as substance use, antisocial conduct,
5 and ADHD, are collectively referred to as *externalizing* and have a shared genetic liability.

6 We applied a multivariate approach that leverages genetic correlations among externalizing
7 traits for genome-wide association analyses. By pooling data from ~1.5 million people, our
8 approach is statistically more powerful than single-trait analyses and identifies more than 500
9 genetic loci. The identified loci were enriched for genes expressed in the brain and related to
10 nervous system development. A polygenic score constructed from our results captures
11 variation in a broad range of behavioral and medical outcomes that were not part of our
12 genome-wide analyses, including traits that until now lacked well-performing polygenic
13 scores, such as opioid use disorder, suicide, HIV infections, criminal convictions, and
14 unemployment. Our findings are consistent with the idea that persistent difficulties in self-
15 regulation can be conceptualized as a neurodevelopmental condition.

16

Main

Behaviors and disorders related to self-regulation, such as substance use disorders or antisocial behaviors, have far-reaching consequences for affected individuals, their families, communities, and society at large^{1,2}. Collectively, this group of correlated traits are classified as *externalizing*³. Twin-family studies have demonstrated that externalizing liability is highly heritable (~80%)^{4,5}, suggesting it will be as tractable to gene discovery as other complex traits or medical conditions⁶. To date, however, there have been no large-scale molecular genetic studies that utilize the extensive degree of genetic overlap among externalizing traits to aid gene discovery, as most studies have focused on individual disorders or diseases⁷. But for many high-cost, high-risk externalizing behaviors – opioid use disorder and suicide attempts being salient examples – there are too few cases available with genome-wide data to yield sufficient power for gene discovery^{8,9}.

A complementary strategy to the single-disease approach is to study the shared genetic architecture across traits in multivariate analyses, which boosts statistical power by pooling data across genetically correlated traits¹⁰. Multivariate approaches can utilize summary statistics from genome-wide association studies (GWAS), which are now widely available, to allow for the discovery of connections between phenotypes not naturally studied together because they span different domains, fields of study, or life stages. Conveniently, by adjusting for sample overlap, novel statistical methods can attain an even greater effective sample size by efficiently utilizing observations from overlapping studies. Elucidating the shared genetic basis of externalizing liability has the potential to advance our understanding of the biological processes related to behavioral undercontrol, and enables mapping the pathways by which genetic risk and socio-environmental factors interact to contribute to the development of different externalizing outcomes.

1 Here, we applied genomic structural equation modeling (Genomic SEM) to summary
2 statistics from GWAS on multiple forms of externalizing behavior for which large samples
3 were available¹⁰. This approach was grounded in the existing literature showing shared
4 genetic liability across numerous externalizing disorders and with non-psychiatric variation in
5 externalizing behavior^{5,11}. We posited that applying this multivariate approach would lead to
6 the identification of genetic variants associated with a broad array of externalizing
7 phenotypes, as well as related behavioral, social, and medical outcomes that were not directly
8 included in our genome-wide association analysis.

9 Results

10 *Multivariate analysis of seven externalizing phenotypes identifies numerous genetic* 11 *associations with a general liability to externalizing*

12 Following our preregistered analysis plan (<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/XKV36>,
13 Supplementary Information section 1), we collated GWAS summary statistics from
14 externalizing-related disorders and behaviors, with our final analysis using data from seven
15 externalizing phenotypes with sample sizes >50,000 (**Table 1**): (1) attention-
16 deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), (2) problematic alcohol use (ALCP), (3) lifetime
17 cannabis use (CANN), (4) age at first sexual intercourse (FSEX), (5) number of sexual
18 partners (NSEX), (6) general risk tolerance (RISK), and (7) lifetime smoking initiation
19 (SMOK). All samples were of European ancestry. The GWAS protocol is described in
20 Supplementary Information section 2 (**Supplementary Tables 1–4**).

21

Table 1. Summary of seven externalizing-related disorders and behaviors with GWAS summary statistics ($N > 50,000$)

Phenotype (abbreviation)	N	h^2 (SE)	λ_{GC}	Mean χ^2	Intercept	Ratio	Reference
Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)	53,293	.235 (.015)	1.253	1.297	1.034	.113	¹²
Problematic alcohol use (ALCP)	164,121	.055 (.004)	1.149	1.174	1.013	.073	^{13,14}
Lifetime cannabis use (CANN)	186,875	.066 (.004)	1.230	1.267	1.026	.098	¹⁵
Age at first sexual intercourse (FSEX)	357,187	.115 (.004)	1.623	1.869	1.036	.041	¹⁶
Number of sexual partners (NSEX)	336,121	.097 (.004)	1.492	1.682	1.027	.041	¹⁶
General risk tolerance (RISK)	426,379	.053 (.002)	1.372	1.461	1.019	.041	¹⁶
Lifetime smoking initiation (SMOK)	1,251,809	.078 (.002)	2.328	3.152	1.126	.058	¹⁷

Notes: The statistics reported in this table were all estimated with LD Score regression¹⁸. Heritability (h^2) is on the observed scale¹⁸. λ_{GC} is the median χ^2 statistic divided by the expected median of the χ^2 distribution with 1 degree of freedom¹⁹. Mean χ^2 is the average χ^2 statistic. Intercept is the estimated LD Score regression intercept. Ratio measures stratification bias, defined as $(\text{Intercept} - 1) / (\text{Mean } \chi^2 - 1)$ ¹⁸.

1 Consistent with twin studies^{4,5}, the genetic correlations among the seven discovery
2 phenotypes were moderate to high (**Figure 1A** and **Supplementary Table 5**). Using
3 Genomic SEM¹⁰ (Supplementary Information section 3), which is unbiased by sample
4 overlap and differences in sample sizes in the discovery phenotypes, we formally modeled
5 the genetic covariances among the seven phenotypes and found that a common factor model
6 fits the data best. This common factor, which we refer to as *EXT*, captures a shared genetic
7 liability to the seven externalizing traits that we included in our analyses (**Figure 1B** and
8 **Supplementary Table 7**).

9 We then extended Genomic SEM to estimate genetic correlations between *EXT* and
10 92 preregistered phenotypes with GWAS summary statistics that were not included among
11 the seven discovery phenotypes (**Extended Data Fig. 1** and **Supplementary Table 8**). The
12 genetic correlations indicate convergent and discriminant validity of the common *EXT* factor
13 (**Figure 1C**): As anticipated, *EXT* showed strong genetic correlations with drug exposure (r_g
14 = .91), antisocial behavior (r_g = .65), motor impulsivity (r_g = .70), failures to plan (r_g = .70),

1 and (lack of) agreeableness ($r_g = -.79$), a personality trait characterized by kindness and
2 cooperativeness that has been found to be low in individuals displaying antisocial behavior.
3 *EXT* was also strongly correlated with suicide attempts ($r_g = .68$). *EXT* showed more modest
4 inverse correlations with educational attainment ($r_g = -.32$) and intelligence ($r_g = -.23$),
5 indicating that the latent factor is not simply reflecting genetic influences on cognitive ability.
6 Finally, there was a strong genetic correlation with the Townsend index ($r_g = .71$), a measure
7 of neighborhood deprivation that reflects high concentrations of unemployment, household
8 overcrowding, and low concentrations of home- and car-ownership²⁰.

9

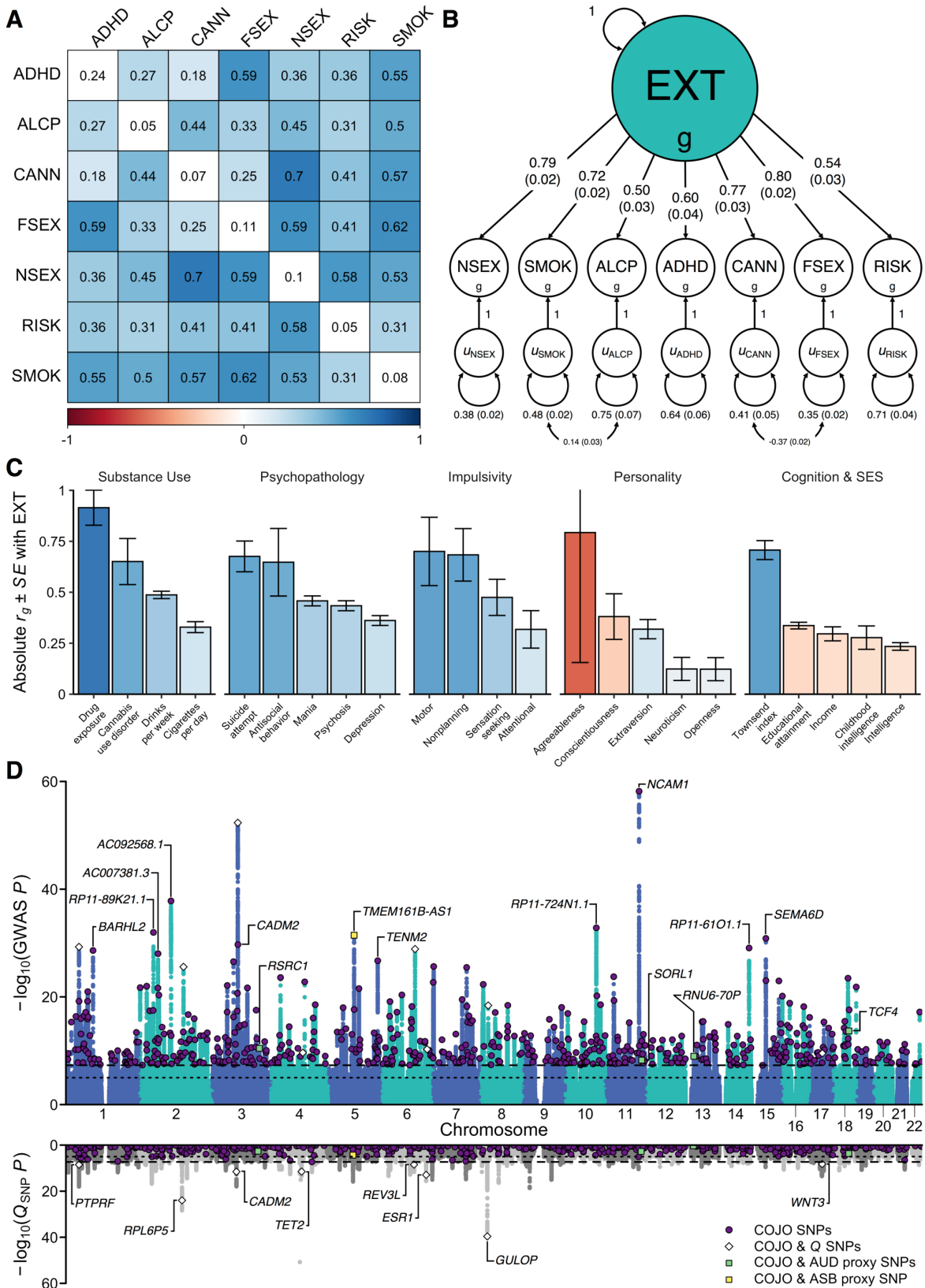


Figure 1 | Multivariate genome-wide analyses with Genomic SEM. (A) Pair-wise genetic correlations (r_g) among seven discovery phenotypes, with observed-scale SNP heritabilities (h^2) on the diagonal. **(B)** Path diagram of a confirmatory factor model estimated with Genomic SEM. The parameter estimates were

1 standardized, and standard errors are presented in parentheses. (C) Absolute value genetic correlations, $|r_g|$,
2 between the genetic externalizing factor (*EXT*) and phenotypes selected to establish convergent and discriminant
3 validity, where blue and red bars represent positive and negative genetic correlations, respectively. Standard
4 errors are presented as error bars. (D) GWAS associations (top panel) and Q_{SNP} tests of heterogeneity (bottom
5 panel) for *EXT*. Purple dots represent 579 *EXT* lead SNPs that are conditionally and jointly associated (COJO) at
6 genome-wide significance (two-sided test $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$). White diamonds represent eight of the 579 SNPs that
7 also show significant Q_{SNP} heterogeneity. Four green and one yellow squares represent five out of the 579 SNPs
8 that also were Bonferroni-significant proxy-phenotype associations with alcohol use disorder (AUD) and
9 antisocial behavior (ASB), respectively. ADHD is attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, ALCP is problematic
10 alcohol use, CANN is lifetime cannabis use, *EXT* is externalizing, FSEX is age at first sex, NSEX is number of
11 sexual partners, RISK is general risk tolerance, SMOK is lifetime smoking initiation.

12
13 We next used Genomic SEM¹⁰ to perform a GWAS on the shared genetic liability
14 *EXT* (**Figure 1D** and **Extended Data Fig. 2**) (Supplementary Information section 3.4). This
15 analysis estimated single-nucleotide polymorphism (SNP) associations directly with the *EXT*
16 factor, with an effective sample size of $N = 1,492,085$ individuals. These analyses are
17 different in their approach and substantially increase sample size, statistical power, and the
18 range of findings compared to previous work²¹ (Supplementary Information section 2.2.1).
19 After applying conditional and joint multiple-SNP analysis (COJO) on a set of near-
20 independent, genome-wide significant (two-sided test $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$) lead SNPs²², we identified
21 579 conditionally and jointly associated SNPs (**Supplementary Table 9**), meaning they were
22 significantly associated with *EXT* even after statistically adjusting for each other and other
23 lead SNPs. Of the 579 *EXT* SNPs and their correlates within linkage disequilibrium (LD)
24 regions ($r^2 > 0.1$), 121 (21%) were new loci, not previously associated with any of the seven
25 externalizing behaviors/disorders that went into the Genomic SEM model, and 41 (7%) can
26 be classified as entirely novel, as they have not been reported previously for any trait in the
27 GWAS literature.

1 Genomic SEM was used to perform SNP-level tests of heterogeneity (Q_{SNP} ;
2 Supplementary Information section 3.5.1) that investigate whether each SNP had consistent,
3 pleiotropic effects on the seven input phenotypes that effectively operate via the shared
4 genetic liability *EXT* (**Extended Data Fig. 2**). Only 1% (8/579) of the 579 *EXT* SNPs were
5 significant (one-sided $Q_{\text{SNP}} P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$) in Q_{SNP} tests (**Figure 1D**; **Supplementary Table 9**),
6 providing further evidence that the genetic variants we identified primarily index a unitary
7 dimension of genetic externalizing liability rather than representing an amalgamation of
8 variants with divergent associations across the discovery phenotypes. The genome-wide Q_{SNP}
9 analysis was adequately powered (mean $\chi^2 = 1.864$; **Extended Data Fig. 2**), and as expected,
10 it identified heterogeneity in regions of the genome not associated with *EXT*. The strongest
11 Q_{SNP} and most salient example of a trait-specific association is SNP rs1229984 (one-sided
12 $Q_{\text{SNP}} P = 1.67 \times 10^{-51}$). This particular SNP, located in the gene *ADH1B*, is a known missense
13 variant with a well-established role in alcohol metabolism²³, and it was not associated with
14 *EXT* (two-sided $P = 0.022$) but only with problematic alcohol use (two-sided $P = 6.43 \times 10^{-57}$).

15 Because the discovery stage effectively exhausted large study cohorts available for
16 strict replication, we instead performed a series of preregistered quasi-replication analyses,
17 which have previously been applied successfully in the GWAS setting^{24,25}. Further below, we
18 additionally perform holistic quasi-replication of the 579 *EXT* SNPs in polygenic score
19 analyses (also in within-family models). For SNP-level quasi-replication analyses of the 579
20 SNPs (Supplementary Information section 4), a three-step holistic method tested their
21 association with two independent, GWAS meta-analyses on externalizing phenotypes: (1)
22 alcohol use disorder (r_g with *EXT* = 0.52; $N = 202,004$), and (2) antisocial behavior (r_g with
23 *EXT* = 0.69; $N = 32,574$). First, we tested whether the 579 SNPs (or an LD proxy for missing
24 SNPs, $r^2 > 0.8$) showed sign concordance, *i.e.*, the same direction of effect between *EXT* and
25 alcohol use disorder or antisocial behavior: 75.4% of SNPs showed sign concordance with

1 alcohol use disorder (two-sided test $P = 6.84 \times 10^{-36}$) and 66.9% with antisocial behavior (two-
2 sided test $P = 1.39 \times 10^{-15}$) (**Extended Data Fig. 3**). For the second and third tests, we
3 generated empirical null distributions for the two phenotypes by randomly selecting 250 near-
4 independent ($r^2 < 0.1$) SNPs per each of the 579 SNPs, matched on allele frequency. In the
5 second test, a greater proportion of the 579 SNPs were nominally associated ($P < 0.05$) with
6 the two phenotypes compared to their empirical null distributions: 124 (21.4% vs. 6.6%) with
7 alcohol use disorder (two-sided $P = 1.87 \times 10^{-31}$) and 58 (10.5% vs. 4.7%) with antisocial
8 behavior ($P = 1.64 \times 10^{-8}$). In the third test, the 579 SNPs were jointly more strongly enriched
9 for association with alcohol use disorder (one-sided Mann-Whitney test $P = 5.89 \times 10^{-26}$) and
10 antisocial behavior ($P = 1.10 \times 10^{-5}$) compared to their empirical null distributions. Overall,
11 the quasi-replications consistently suggested that the GWAS of *EXT* is not spurious overall,
12 and that it is enriched for genetic signal with phenotypes of central importance to the
13 literature on externalizing.

1 ***Bioinformatic analyses highlight relevant neurodevelopmental and biological processes***

2 We performed a series of bioinformatic analyses to explore the biological processes
3 underlying externalizing liability (Supplementary Information section 6, **Supplementary**
4 **Tables 9–10, and 21–29; Extended Data Figs. 5–8**). Consistent with the idea that persistent
5 difficulties in self-regulation can be conceptualized as a neurodevelopmental condition^{26,27},
6 MAGMA gene-property analyses suggested an abundance of enrichment in genes expressed
7 in brain tissues, particularly during prenatal developmental stages (**Extended Data Fig. 7**),
8 with the strongest enrichment seen in the cerebellum, followed by frontal cortex, limbic
9 system tissues, and pituitary gland tissues (**Extended Data Fig. 6**). Furthermore, MAGMA
10 gene-set analysis identified gene sets related to neurogenesis, nervous system development,
11 and synaptic plasticity, among other gene-sets related to neuronal function and structure.

12 Because of the strong polygenic signal identified in the GWAS of *EXT*, four different
13 gene-based analyses identified an abundance of implicated genes (>3,000): (1) functional
14 annotation of the 579 SNPs to their nearest gene with FUMA²⁸, which suggested 587 genes;
15 (2) MAGMA gene-based association analysis²⁹, which identified 928 Bonferroni-significant
16 genes (one-sided test $P < 2.74 \times 10^{-6}$); (3) H-MAGMA³⁰, a method that assigns non-coding
17 SNPs to cognate genes based on chromatin interactions in adult brain tissue and which
18 identified 2,033 Bonferroni-significant genes (one-sided test $P < 9.84 \times 10^{-7}$); and (4) S-
19 PrediXcan³¹, which uses transcriptome-based analyses of predicted gene expression in 13
20 brain tissues and which identified 348 Bonferroni-significant gene-tissue pairs (two-sided test
21 $P < 2.73 \times 10^{-7}$).

22 We found 34 genes that were consistently identified in all four methods, while 741
23 overlapped across two or more methods (**Supplementary Table 29; Extended Data Fig. 8**).
24 Several of the 34 implicated genes are novel discoveries for the psychiatric/behavioral
25 literature and have previously been identified only in relation to biomedical disease. Such

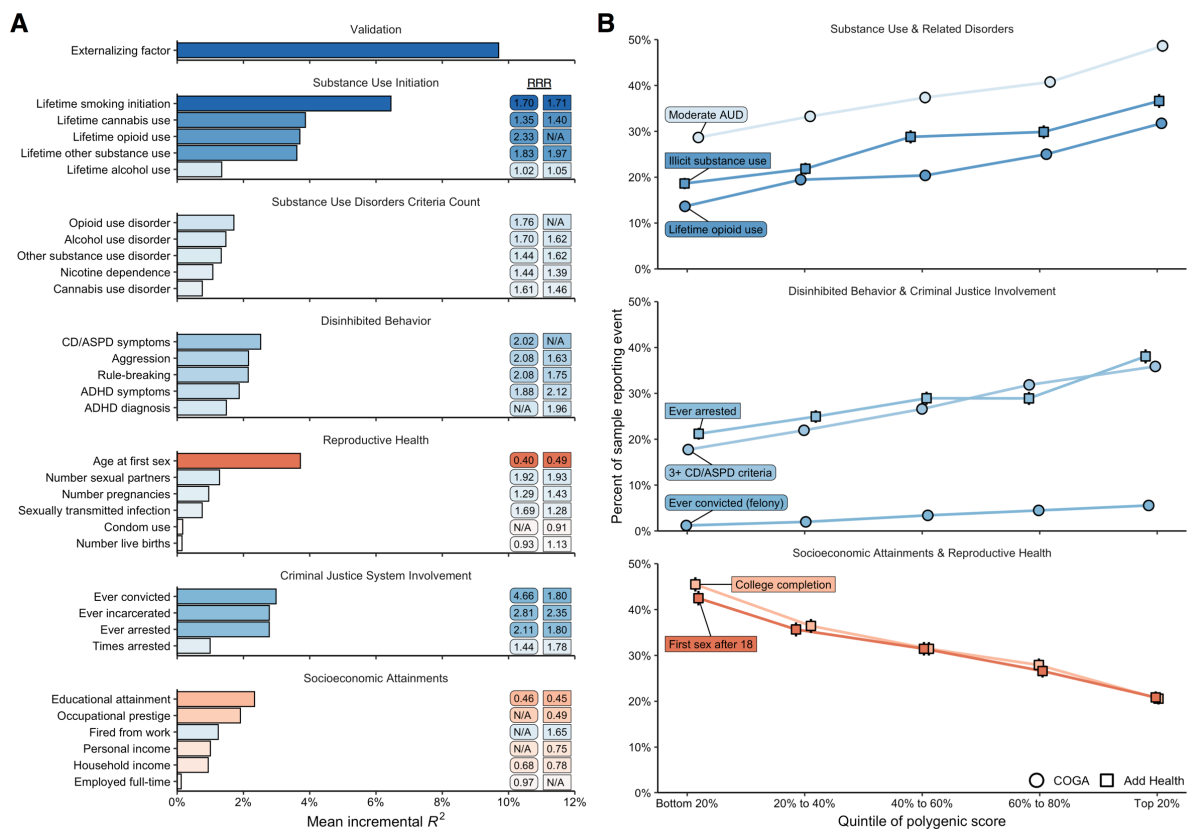
1 discoveries include *ALMS1* (previously associated with kidney function and urinary
2 metabolites³²), and *ERAP2* (blood protein levels and autoimmune disease^{33,34}). Other genes
3 among the 34 have previously been identified in GWAS of behavioral or psychiatric traits:
4 Cell Adhesion Molecule 2 (*CADM2*, previously identified in GWAS related to self-
5 regulation, including drug use and risk tolerance^{16,35}), Zic Family Member 4 (*ZIC4*,
6 associated with brain volume³⁶), Gamma-Aminobutyric Acid Type A Receptor Subunit
7 Alpha 2 (*GABRA2*; the site of action for alcohol and benzodiazepines, extensively studied in
8 relation to alcohol dependence^{37,38}, and proposed candidate gene for many psychiatric
9 disorders^{39,40}), *NEGR1* (neuronal growth regulator, associated with intelligence and
10 educational attainment^{25,41}), and Paired Basic Amino Acid Cleaving Enzyme (*FURIN*,
11 associated with schizophrenia, risk tolerance, and trans-diagnostic vulnerability to psychiatric
12 disorders^{42,43}).

13 ***Genetic risk scores explain substantial variation in behavioral, psychiatric, and social*** 14 ***outcomes***

15 We created a genome-wide polygenic score for *EXT*, adjusted for LD^{44,45}, among
16 subjects from two European-ancestry datasets selected for their detailed phenotypes related to
17 externalizing outcomes (Supplementary Information section 5): (1) the National Longitudinal
18 Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health; $N = 5,107$), a U.S.-based study of
19 adolescents who were recruited from secondary schools in the mid-1990s; (2) the
20 Collaborative Study on the Genetics of Alcoholism (COGA; $N = 7,594$), a U.S.-based study
21 focused on understanding genetic contributions to alcohol use disorders.

22 To investigate the validity of *EXT*, in each sample, we fit a latent factor model to
23 phenotypic data corresponding to the seven Genomic SEM phenotypes (**Extended Data Fig.**
24 **4 and Supplementary Table 13**). Controlling for age, sex, and ten principal components of
25 genetic ancestry, the *EXT* polygenic score was strongly associated with the latent phenotypic

1 factor in both data sets ($\beta_{\text{Add Health}} = 0.33$, 95% CI, 0.30 to 0.36, $\Delta R^2 = 10.5\%$; $\beta_{\text{COGA}} = 0.30$,
 2 95% CI, 0.27 to 0.34, $\Delta R^2 = 8.9\%$; **Figure 2A and Supplementary Table 14**). The variance
 3 explained by the *EXT* polygenic score ($\Delta R^2 \sim 8.9\text{--}10.5\%$) is commensurate with many
 4 conventional variables used in social science research, including parental socioeconomic
 5 status, family income or structure, and neighborhood disadvantage/disorder^{46–48}. Next, as
 6 further quasi-replication, in each sample we created a polygenic score using only the 579
 7 *EXT* SNPs. This polygenic score was associated with the latent phenotypic externalizing
 8 factor in both samples, explaining $\sim 3\text{--}4\%$ of the variance ($\beta_{\text{Add Health}} = 0.20$, 95% CI, 0.17 to
 9 0.23; $\beta_{\text{COGA}} = 0.17$, 95% CI, 0.13 to 0.20; **Supplementary Table 14**).

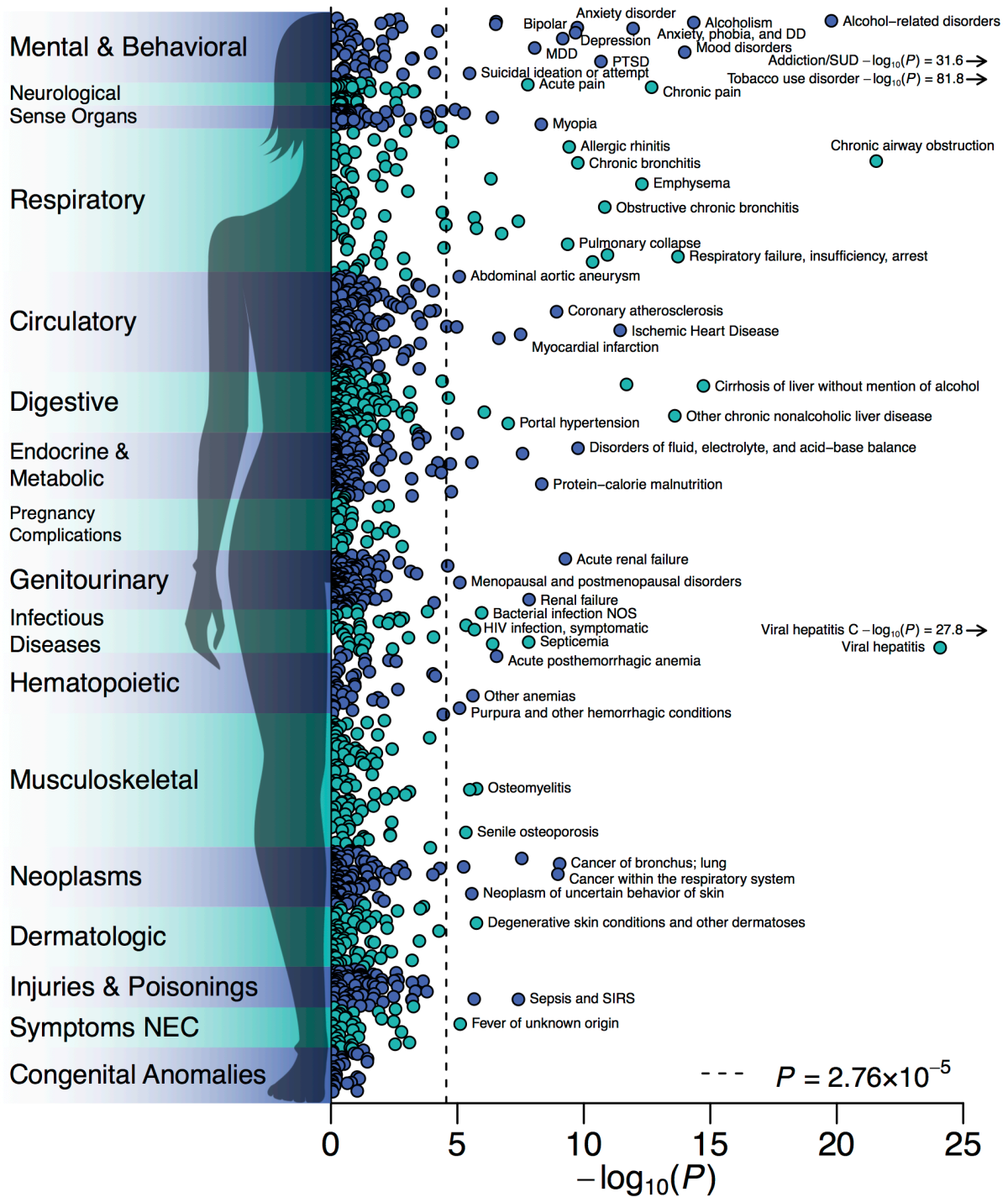


11 **Figure 2 | Polygenic score associations with behavioral, psychiatric, and social outcomes in the**
 12 **independent Add Health ($N = 5,107$) and COGA ($N = 7,594$) datasets. (A) Bar charts illustrating the mean**
 13 **proportion of variance (incremental R^2 , or ΔR^2) explained by the polygenic score. Blue and red bars indicate**
 14 **positive and negative associations, respectively. Relative risk ratios (RRRs), comparing individuals in the lowest**
 15 **quintile to the highest quintile of polygenic score.**

1 20% to those in the highest 20% of the polygenic score distribution, are reported for Add Health and COGA in
2 square and round boxes, respectively. **(B)** Line charts illustrating the relative risks across quintiles of the
3 polygenic score for eight illustrative outcomes: (1) meeting 4 or more criteria for alcohol use disorder (AUD),
4 (2) lifetime use of an illicit substance other than cannabis, (3) lifetime opioid use, (4) ever being arrested, (5)
5 meeting 3 or more criteria for conduct disorder (CD) or antisocial personality disorder (ASPD), (6) ever being
6 convicted of a felony, (7) completing college, and (8) first sexual intercourse at the age of 18 or older. 95%
7 confidence intervals are presented with error bars for each quintile.

8
9 We next explored to what extent polygenic scores for *EXT* were associated with
10 childhood externalizing disorders and a variety of specific phenotypes that reflect difficulty
11 with self-regulation or its social consequences (**Figure 2B** and **Supplementary Tables 16–**
12 **19**). Polygenic scores for *EXT* explained significant variance (ΔR^2) in criteria counts of
13 ADHD (mean $\Delta R^2 = 1.65\%$), conduct disorder (CD; mean $\Delta R^2 = 3.1\%$), and oppositional
14 defiant disorder (ODD; $\Delta R^2 = 1.96\%$), as well as in phenotypes categorized as substance use
15 initiation (mean $\Delta R^2 = 1.3–6.5\%$), substance use disorders (mean $\Delta R^2 = 0.8–1.7\%$),
16 disinhibited behaviors (mean $\Delta R^2 = 1.5–2.5\%$), criminal justice system involvement (mean
17 $\Delta R^2 = 1.0–3.0\%$), reproductive health (mean $\Delta R^2 = 0.3–3.7\%$), and socioeconomic attainment
18 (mean $\Delta R^2 = 0.1–2.3\%$). Many of the phenotypes – such as opioid use disorder criteria count,
19 conduct disorder and antisocial personality disorder criteria count, lifetime history of arrest or
20 incarceration, and lifetime history of being fired from work, were not included in our
21 Genomic SEM analyses; however, our *EXT* polygenic score is notable in capturing
22 appreciable variance in phenotypes that are still lacking large GWAS samples (a striking
23 example being opioid use disorder⁸). The associations between the *EXT* polygenic score and
24 this broad range of phenotypes represents an affirmative test of the hypothesis that genetic
25 variants associated with externalizing liability generalize to a wide variety of behavioral and
26 social outcomes related to behavioral undercontrol.

27



1
 2 **Figure 3 | Phenome-wide association study in the BioVU biorepository.** $-\log_{10} P$ values of two-sided test for
 3 association of polygenic score for *EXT* with 1,335 medical outcomes were derived with logistic regression in up
 4 to 66,915 patients, adjusted for sex, median age in the EHR data, and the first 10 genetic PCs. The dashed line is
 5 the Bonferroni-corrected significance threshold; adjusted for the number of tested medical conditions. 84
 6 medical conditions were Bonferroni-significant, while 255 conditions were significant at a false discovery rate
 7 less than 0.05. The labels for some conditions were omitted. The full results, including case-control counts,
 8 effect sizes, and standard errors, are reported in **Supplementary Table 20**.

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To evaluate medical outcomes associated with genetic liability to externalizing, we conducted a phenome-wide association study (PheWAS) in 66,915 genotyped individuals of European-ancestry in the BioVU biorepository, a U.S.-based biobank of electronic health records from the Vanderbilt University Medical Center, spanning 1990 to 2017^{49,50}. A logistic regression was fit to 1,335 case/control disease phenotypes. Of these, 255 disease phenotypes were associated with the *EXT* polygenic score at a false discovery rate less than 0.05 (**Figure 3 and Supplementary Table 20**). The most abundant associations were with mental and behavioral disorders, such as substance use, mood disorders, suicidal ideation, and attempted suicide. Individuals with higher *EXT* polygenic scores also showed worse health in nearly every bodily system. They were more likely to suffer, for example, from ischemic heart disease, viral hepatitis C and HIV infection, type 2 diabetes and obesity, cirrhosis of liver, sepsis, and lung cancer. Notably, many of these medical outcomes are mediated by behaviors related to self-regulation, e.g., smoking, drinking, drug use, condomless sex, and overeating.

Within-family analyses demonstrate that polygenic associations are robust to confounding

Genetic associations detected in GWAS can be due to direct genetic effects, but can also be confounded by uncontrolled population stratification, indirect genetic effects mediated through the parental environment, and assortative mating^{51,52}. While reducing statistical power, sibling comparisons overcome these methodological challenges, because meiosis randomizes genotypes to siblings^{51,53}. We therefore conducted within-family analyses of polygenic score associations in the sibling sub-samples of Add Health ($N = 994$ siblings from 492 families) and COGA ($N = 1,353$ siblings from 621 families), as well as a sample of sibling pairs from the UK Biobank ($N = 39,640$), which were held-out from the discovery stage (Supplementary Information section 2.3.2).

1 In Add Health and COGA, the phenotypic factor derived from observations
2 corresponding to the seven discovery phenotypes (see above) was regressed on the *EXT*
3 polygenic scores in a within-family model (**Supplementary Table 15**). Parameter estimates
4 from the within-family models ($\beta_{\text{Add Health}} = 0.12$, 95% CI, 0.04 to 0.20; $\beta_{\text{COGA}} = 0.14$, 95%
5 CI, 0.08 to 0.20) were slightly attenuated compared to OLS models without family-specific
6 intercepts ($\beta_{\text{Add Health}} = 0.20$, 95% CI, 0.16 to 0.24; $\beta_{\text{COGA}} = 0.16$, 95% CI, 0.12 to 0.20), but
7 remained strong (Add Health $\beta / \beta_{\text{WF}} = 1.667$; COGA $\beta / \beta_{\text{WF}} = 1.142$) and statistically
8 significant (two-sided test $P = 4.89 \times 10^{-3}$ and 1.87×10^{-6} , respectively). Additionally, the
9 association of the quasi-replication polygenic score constructed with the 579 *EXT* SNPs did
10 not attenuate in within-family models and remained significant (**Supplementary Table 15**).

11 In the UK Biobank sibling hold-out sample, we conducted polygenic score analyses
12 of 33 phenotypes from the domains of risky behavior, reproductive health, cognitive ability,
13 personality, and socioeconomic status (**Supplementary Table 19**). Similar to Add Health
14 and COGA, within-family estimates were only modestly attenuated for risky behavior and
15 reproductive health outcomes (mean $\beta / \beta_{\text{WF}} = 1.079$); however, effect-sizes in within-family
16 models were substantially attenuated for cognitive ability and socioeconomic status outcomes
17 ($\beta / \beta_{\text{WF}}$ was 3.3 for educational attainment, 4.9 for household income, 2.1 for neighborhood
18 deprivation). Overall, the *EXT* polygenic score remained significantly associated (two-sided
19 test $P < 0.05$) with 21 outcomes, showing that our GWAS of externalizing captures direct
20 genetic effects on behavioral health and is not solely a consequence of uncontrolled
21 population stratification, indirect genetic effects, or other forms of environmental
22 confounding.

23 Discussion

24 Externalizing disorders and behaviors are a widely prevalent cause of human
25 suffering, but understanding of the molecular genetic underpinnings of externalizing has

1 lagged considerably behind progress made in other areas of medical and psychiatric genetics.
2 For example, dozens of associated genetic loci have been discovered for schizophrenia (>100
3 loci)⁵⁴, bipolar disorder (30 loci)⁵⁵, and major depressive disorders (44 loci)⁵⁶, whereas recent
4 GWASs of antisocial behavior⁵⁷, alcohol use disorders⁵⁸, and opioid use disorders⁸ have
5 identified only a very small number of significantly associated loci, if any at all. Here, we
6 used multivariate genomic analyses to accelerate genetic discovery, identifying 579 genome-
7 wide significant loci associated with a predisposition toward externalizing disorders and
8 behaviors, 121 of which are entirely novel discoveries for any of the seven phenotypes
9 analyzed. Our results demonstrate that moving beyond traditional disease classification
10 categories can enhance gene discovery, improve polygenic scores, and provide information
11 about the underlying pathways by which genetic variants impact clinical outcomes. GWAS
12 efforts find almost ubiquitous genetic correlations across psychiatric disorders and
13 diagnoses^{59,60}; new analytic methods now allow us to capitalize on these genetic correlations.
14 Pragmatically, non-disease phenotypes such as the ones we use here (*e.g.*, self-reported age at
15 first sex) are often easier to measure in the general population than diagnostic status, making
16 it easier to achieve large sample sizes. Expanding beyond individual diagnoses increases our
17 ability to detect genes underlying human behavioral and medical outcomes of consequence.

18 Our results highlight again that there is no distinct line between the genetic study of
19 biomedical conditions and the genetic study of social and behavioral traits⁶¹. Linking biology
20 with socially-valued behavioral outcomes can be politically sensitive (**Box 1**)⁶². Polygenic
21 scores created using our GWAS results were associated not just with psychiatric and
22 substance use disorders, but also with correlated social outcomes, such as lower employment
23 and greater criminal justice system involvement, as well as with biomedical conditions
24 affecting nearly every system in the body. Considered together, our analyses demonstrate the

1 far-reaching toll of human suffering borne by people with high genetic liabilities to
2 externalizing.

4 **Box 1. Grappling with the Legacy of Eugenics**

5 In 1912, Henry Goddard published what is now considered an infamous work of
6 pseudoscience: *The Kallakak Family* traced several generations of a “feeble-minded” family
7 to argue that not just intellectual ability, but also drunkenness, criminality, sexual
8 promiscuity, and morality were hereditary⁶³. On the basis of these pedigrees, Goddard
9 recommended that the “feeble-minded” should be institutionalized and prohibited from
10 reproducing. Horrifically, these recommendations were put into practice: Involuntary
11 sterilization programs and other forms of state-sponsored violence targeting the poor and
12 ethnic/racial minorities persisted for decades^{64,65}. Even now, the danger of eugenics is not
13 safely in the past. Modern genetics research is routinely appropriated by white supremacist
14 movements to argue that racialized disparities in health, employment, and criminal justice
15 system involvement are due to the genetic inferiority of people of color rather than
16 environmental and historical disadvantages^{66–68}. At the same time, failing to understand how
17 genetic differences contribute to vulnerability to externalizing can increase stigma and blame
18 for these behaviors^{69,70}. Given the horrific legacy of eugenics, the ongoing reality of racism in
19 the medical and criminal justice systems, and the importance of combatting stigma in
20 psychiatric disorders, the scientific results we report here, which are, for technical reasons,
21 limited to European individuals, must be interpreted with the utmost care. Please see our
22 supporting materials at www.externalizing.org for more information.

23
24 Our polygenic score for externalizing has one of the largest effect sizes of any
25 polygenic score in psychiatric and behavioral genetics, accounting for 10% of the variance in

1 externalizing factor scores, and meaningful variance in outcomes as varied as opioid use, age
2 at first sex, being fired from work, and being convicted of a crime. These effect sizes rival the
3 associations observed with “traditional” covariates used in social science research. But, these
4 effect sizes remain far below twin estimates of heritability for externalizing⁵ and far below
5 what is necessary to predict these outcomes for any individual^{71,72}. Furthermore, while effect
6 sizes were only modestly attenuated in within-family models of risky behavior and
7 reproductive behavior, they were substantially attenuated in analyses of socioeconomic
8 outcomes, indicating that substantial work remains to be done to clarify the association
9 between externalizing genetics and socioeconomic inequality⁵¹. Additionally, application of
10 these genetic discoveries to improve research and intervention will be limited as long as the
11 samples available for genomics research fail to reflect the world’s genetic diversity⁷³.

12 Finally, these results are *not* evidence that some people are genetically determined to
13 experience certain life outcomes or are “innately” antisocial. Genetic differences are
14 probabilistically associated with psychiatric, medical, and social outcomes, in part via
15 environmental mechanisms that might differ across historical, political, and economic
16 contexts⁷⁴. For example, a policy change like decriminalization of cannabis use might
17 mitigate associations between genetic vulnerabilities and criminal justice system
18 involvement, because the state ceases to criminalize a behavior to which some individuals
19 have a greater genetic susceptibility. At the same time, increased availability and decreased
20 stigma may create environments more conducive to the development of substance problems
21 among individuals who are genetically at risk⁷⁵. The impact of genetic factors might also
22 depend on other forms of social capital and privilege. For instance, childhood externalizing is
23 associated with greater adult earnings, but only for children not raised in poverty^{76,77}. The
24 genetic differences identified here can thus be used in future research as a tool to trace how
25 lifespan development is shaped via complex interactions between genetic predispositions,

1 environmental influences (*e.g.*, parenting, peer, and romantic relationships) and social
2 institutions (*e.g.*, schools, jails, hospitals, creditors, and employers).

3 **Online methods**

4 The article is accompanied by Supplementary Information with further details. The
5 study was performed according to a preregistered analysis plan
6 (<https://doi.org/10.17605/OSF.IO/XKV36>), which specified that we would either generate
7 new or collect existing single-phenotype genome-wide association study (GWAS) summary
8 statistics on phenotypes related to the externalizing spectrum (Supplementary Information
9 section 1). In the discovery stage, the summary statistics were to be analyzed with Genomic
10 SEM with the aims of (a) estimating a genetic factor structure underlying externalizing
11 liability, (b) identifying single-nucleotide polymorphisms (SNPs) and genes primarily
12 involved in a shared genetic liability to externalizing, and (c) increasing the accuracy of
13 genetic risk scores for specific externalizing phenotypes that are currently intractable to study
14 in large samples. To ensure satisfying statistical power, we preregistered a minimum sample-
15 size threshold of $N > 15,000$, and that additional exclusions would be based on displaying
16 negligible or inaccurate SNP-based heritability or genetic covariance. The study did not
17 manipulate an experimental condition, and thus, was neither randomized nor blinded.

18 **Collecting existing single-phenotype GWAS on externalizing phenotypes**

19 A detailed definition of “externalizing phenotypes” was preregistered to delimit the
20 data collection of single-phenotype GWAS summary statistics (Supplementary Information
21 section 2.1). Summary statistics from existing studies were either provided by or downloaded
22 from the public repositories of 23andMe, the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium (PGC), the
23 Million Veterans Program (MVP), the International Cannabis Consortium (ICC), the GWAS
24 & Sequencing Consortium of Alcohol and Nicotine Use (GSCAN), the Social Science
25 Genetics Association Consortium (SSGAC), the Genetics of Personality Consortium (GPC),
26 and the Broad Antisocial Behavior Consortium (Broad ABC), see Supplementary
27 Information section 2.2 for more details. All GWAS that were considered for inclusion are
28 listed in **Supplementary Table 1**, and **Supplementary Table 2** reports the underlying
29 studies that had contributed to the seven GWAS (or GWAS meta-analysis) that were included
30 the final multivariate model specification (see below).

1 **GWAS in UK Biobank (UKB)**

2 New GWAS were estimated in UKB (Supplementary Information section 2.3), of
3 which summary statistics for “age at first sexual intercourse” and “Alcohol Use Disorder
4 Identification Test problem items” (AUDIT-P) were later included in the final multivariate
5 model (see below). The GWAS were performed with linear mixed models (BOLT-LMM⁷⁸)
6 and were statistically adjusted for sex, birth year, sex-specific birth-year interaction dummies,
7 genotyping array and batch, and 40 genetic principal components (PCs). Two partly
8 overlapping hold-out subsamples of UKB participants were excluded from all single-
9 phenotype GWAS summary statistics that included UKB data, and the participants were
10 instead retained as an independent sample for polygenic score analyses (Supplementary
11 Information section 2.3.2). Genetic relatives (pairwise KING coefficient ≥ 0.0442) of the
12 held-out individuals were excluded from the study altogether to ensure independence
13 between the discovery and follow-up analyses. Whenever an existing GWAS (or meta-
14 analysis) was based on UKB data, we re-estimated the UKB component using the same
15 phenotype definition as in the existing study, while excluding the held-out participants and
16 their genetic relatives. See Supplementary Information section 2.3.2 for further details.

17 **GWAS inclusion criteria, quality control, and meta-analysis**

18 All GWAS were performed among individuals that (a) were of European ancestry, (b)
19 were observed for all relevant covariates, (c) were successfully genotyped and passed
20 standardized sample-level quality control (according to study-specific protocols^{12–15,21,79}), and
21 (d) were unrelated (unless a particular GWAS was estimated with linear mixed models).
22 Genotypes were imputed with reference data from either the 1000 Genomes Consortium⁸⁰,
23 the Haplotype Reference Consortium⁸¹, the UK10K Consortium⁸², or a combination thereof.
24 We performed quality control of GWAS summary statistics with a whole-genome sequenced
25 reference panel, assembled from 1000 Genomes Consortium⁸⁰ and UK10K Consortium⁸² data
26 (Supplementary Information section 2.4.1). Our quality-control procedure applied
27 recommended⁸³ SNP-filtering to remove rare SNPs (minor allele frequency < 0.005), SNPs
28 with an IMPUTE imputation quality (INFO) score less than 0.9, and otherwise low-quality
29 variants (**Supplementary Table 3**). For a complete description of the quality-control
30 procedure, see Supplementary Information section 2.4.

31 We performed sample-size weighted meta-analysis with METAL⁸⁴ (Supplementary
32 Information section 2.5). Thereafter, we excluded any summary statistics that displayed

1 insufficient SNP-based heritability ($h^2 < 0.05$) or GWAS association signal ($\bar{\chi}^2 < 1.05$),
2 estimated with LD Score regression^{18,59}. At this stage, we had collected or generated well-
3 powered summary statistics for eleven phenotype-specific GWAS (or meta-analysis) that
4 satisfied our inclusion criteria and that were kept for exploratory factor analysis
5 (**Supplementary Table 4**): (1) ADHD ($N = 53,293$), (2) age at first sexual intercourse ($N =$
6 $357,187$), (3) problematic alcohol use ($N = 164,684$), (4) automobile speeding propensity (N
7 $= 367,151$), (5) alcoholic consumption (drinks per week; $N = 375,768$), (6) educational
8 attainment ($N = 725,186$), (7) lifetime cannabis use ($N = 186,875$), (9) lifetime smoking
9 initiation ($N = 1,251,809$), (9) general risk tolerance ($N = 426,379$), (10) irritability ($N =$
10 $388,248$), and (11) number of sexual partners ($N = 336,121$).

11 **Exploratory factor analysis of genetic correlations**

12 As an initial analysis to inform and guide the multivariate modeling process, we
13 performed hierarchical clustering of a matrix with pair-wise LD Score genetic correlations
14 (r_g) (Supplementary Information section 3). The GWAS effect-sizes of age at first sexual
15 intercourse and educational attainment were reversed to anticipate positive correlations with
16 externalizing liability. The 11 phenotypes displayed moderate-to-substantial genetic overlap
17 with at least one other phenotype (max $|r_g| = 0.245-0.773$), and the average $|r_g|$ across all
18 pairwise correlations was 0.323 (**Supplementary Table 5**). Three clusters were identified:
19 (1) attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), educational attainment (EDUC), age at
20 first sexual intercourse (FSEX), irritability (IRRT), and smoking initiation (SMOK); (2)
21 problematic alcohol use (ALCP), drinks per week (DRIN); and (3) lifetime cannabis use
22 (CANN), automobile speeding propensity (DRIV), number of sexual partners (NSEX),
23 general risk tolerance (RISK).

24 Following the preregistration, exploratory factor analysis tested four different factor
25 solutions, specifying $1...k + 1$ factors (Supplementary Information section 3.2), where k
26 corresponds to the number of clusters identified in the genetic correlation matrix, while
27 retaining factors that explained at least 15% of the variance (a preregistered threshold).
28 Exploratory factor analysis found that the fourth factor explained only 12.5% of the variance,
29 and thus, the three-factor solution was considered the most appropriate exploratory model in
30 terms of capturing variation (**Supplementary Table 6**). The pattern of factor loadings was
31 consistent with the hierarchical clustering. However, as we detail in Supplementary
32 Information section 3.2, the second and third factor mainly accounted for complex residual
33 variation and divergent residual cross-trait correlations among the subset of phenotypes that

1 had the weakest loadings on the single common factor. Thus, we learned from the exploratory
2 factor analysis that some of the 11 indicators may not be optimal for identifying a single
3 common genetic liability to externalizing, and that a less complex model specification with
4 fewer indicators would perhaps perform better than a three-factor model in the subsequent
5 confirmatory factor analysis.

6 **Confirmatory factor analyses with Genomic SEM**

7 We formally modelled genetic covariances (rather than genetic correlations) and
8 performed confirmatory factor analyses using the method genomic structural equation
9 modeling (Genomic SEM)¹⁰ (Supplementary Information section 3.3). Genomic SEM is
10 unbiased by sample overlap and differences in sample size in the discovery phenotypes, and
11 by applying to GWAS summary statistics it allows for genetic analyses of latent factors in
12 larger samples than is typically possible with individual-level data¹⁰. We compared four
13 models: (1) a common factor model with the aforementioned 11 phenotypes, (2) a correlated
14 three-factors model with the 11 phenotypes (with and without cross-loadings), (3) a bifactor
15 model with the 11 phenotypes, and (4) a revised common factor model that only included
16 seven of the phenotypes that satisfied moderate-to-large (*i.e.*, $\geq .50$) loadings on the single
17 latent factor in model (1) (**Supplementary Table 7**). We found that model (4) was the only
18 model that closely approximated the observed genetic covariance matrix ($\chi^2(12) = 390.234$,
19 AIC = 422.234, CFI = .957, SRMR = .079), fulfilled our preregistered model fit criteria, and
20 coalesced with theoretical expectations of a general shared genetic liability to externalizing.
21 This model was selected as our final factor specification, and we hereafter refer to it as “the
22 latent genetic externalizing factor”, or simply, “the externalizing factor” (*EXT*). To explore
23 the convergent and discriminant validity of the externalizing factor, we estimated genetic
24 correlations between the externalizing factor and 92 traits from various research domains
25 (**Supplementary Table 8**).

26 **Multivariate GWAS analyses with Genomic SEM**

27 Using Genomic SEM, we performed multivariate GWAS analysis by estimating SNP
28 associations with the externalizing factor (*EXT*), which is our main discovery analysis
29 (Supplementary Information section 3.4). We estimated the effective sample size of the
30 resulting “externalizing GWAS” to be $N_{\text{eff}} = 1,492,085$. The GWAS displayed strong
31 association signal, with a mean χ^2 and genomic inflation factor (λ_{GC}) of 3.114 and 2.337,
32 respectively. Analyses with LD Score regression suggest that the strong inflation observed in

1 the association test statistic is attributable to polygenicity rather than bias from population
2 stratification^{10,18}, as the LD Score intercept and attenuation ratio were estimated to be 1.115
3 ($SE = 0.019$) and 0.054 ($SE = 0.009$), respectively.

4 A conventional “clumping” algorithm was applied to identify near-independent
5 genome-wide significant lead SNPs (two-sided $P < 5 \times 10^{-8}$)⁸⁵, which were then subjected to
6 “multi-SNP-based conditional & joint association analysis using GWAS summary data”
7 (COJO) to estimate conditional SNP associations^{22,86} (Supplementary Information section
8 3.4.2). We identified 579 lead SNPs that were conditionally and jointly associated with *EXT*.
9 We performed lookups of these “579 *EXT* SNPs”, as well as any correlated SNPs ($r^2 > 0.1$),
10 in the NHGRI-EBI GWAS Catalog⁷ (version e96 2019-05-03) to investigate whether the
11 identified loci have previously been found associated with other traits at suggestive
12 significance (two-sided $P < 1 \times 10^{-5}$). To evaluate whether each SNP acted through the
13 externalizing factor, we estimated genome-wide Q_{SNP} heterogeneity statistics with Genomic
14 SEM (Supplementary Information section 3.5.1). The null hypothesis of the Q_{SNP} test is that
15 SNP effects on the constituent phenotypes operate (i.e., are statistically mediated) via the
16 *EXT* factor, so a significant Q_{SNP} test indicates that SNP association is better explained by a
17 trait-specific pathway independent of the *EXT* factor. The Q_{SNP} analysis was sufficiently
18 powered to identify substantial heterogeneity in the genome (160 near-independent genome-
19 wide significant Q_{SNP} loci), but reassuringly, did not identify heterogeneity among 99%
20 (571/579) of the *EXT* SNPs. **Supplementary Table 9–10** reports the results of the
21 externalizing GWAS and the heterogeneity analysis, together with bioannotation with
22 “functional mapping and annotation of genetic associations” (FUMA)²⁸.

23 **Proxy-phenotype and quasi-replication analysis**

24 We performed a preregistered proxy-phenotype⁸⁷ and quasi-replication²⁴ analysis by
25 investigating the 579 SNPs (k) for association in two independent, second-stage GWAS on
26 (1) alcohol use disorder ($N = 202,004$, $r_g = 0.52$) and (2) antisocial behavior ($N = 32,574$, $r_g =$
27 0.69) (Supplementary Information section 4). For SNPs missing from the two second-stage
28 GWAS, we analyzed highly correlated proxy SNPs ($r^2 > 0.8$). Significant proxy-phenotype
29 associations were evaluated for Bonferroni-corrected significance (two-sided test $P < 0.05/k$).
30 For the quasi-replication exercises, we generated empirical null distributions for the two
31 second-stage GWAS by randomly selecting 250 near-independent ($r^2 < 0.1$) SNPs matched
32 on MAF (± 1 percentage point) for each of the k SNPs. The quasi-replication approach was
33 performed in three steps: (1) a binomial test of sign concordance, which tested whether the

1 direction of effect of the k SNPs were in greater concordance between the externalizing
2 GWAS and each of the second-stage GWAS compared to what would be expected by chance
3 ($H_0 = 0.5$); (2) a binomial test of whether a greater proportion of the k SNPs were nominally
4 significant (two-sided $P < 0.05$) in the second-stage GWAS compared to the empirical null
5 distribution; (3) a test of joint enrichment, performed as a non-parametric (one-sided) Mann-
6 Whitney test of the null hypothesis that the P values of the k SNPs are derived from the
7 empirical null distribution. We strongly rejected the null hypotheses of all quasi-replication
8 tests, suggesting that the externalizing GWAS is not spurious overall and that it was more
9 enriched for association with the second-stage phenotypes than their respective polygenic
10 background GWAS signal (**Supplementary Table 11–12**).

11 **Polygenic score analyses**

12 We generated polygenic scores by summing genotypes weighed by the effect sizes
13 estimated in the externalizing GWAS, among individuals of European ancestry in five
14 independent study cohorts: (1) Add Health^{88,89}, (2) COGA^{90–92}, (3) PNC^{93,94}, (4) the UKB
15 siblings hold-out cohort⁹⁵, and (5) the BioVU biorepository⁹⁶ (Supplementary Information
16 section 5). In each dataset, we generated three scores, of which two were adjusted for linkage
17 disequilibrium (LD): (1) PRS-CS⁴⁵, (2) LDpred (infinitesimal model)⁴⁴, and (3) unadjusted
18 scores⁹⁷, while using SNPs that overlapped with the high-quality consensus set defined by the
19 HapMap 3 Consortium⁹⁸. Accuracy was evaluated as the incremental R^2 /pseudo- R^2 (ΔR^2)
20 attained by adding the polygenic score to a regression model with baseline covariates, in
21 accordance with previous efforts^{16,99}. The baseline model included covariates for sex, age,
22 and genetic principal components (PCs), and genotyping array and batch. The choice of
23 statistical model (e.g., OLS vs. logit) and adjustment of standard errors depended on (1) the
24 distribution of the phenotype and (2) the structure of the data in the study cohort (independent
25 vs. clustered observations), see Supplementary Information section 5.2.4 for further details.
26 We estimated 95% confidence intervals for ΔR^2 using percentile method bootstrapping with
27 1000 iterations.

28 In Add Health and COGA, we performed out-of-sample validation of *EXT* by
29 modeling a latent externalizing factor using phenotypic data corresponding to the seven
30 Genomic SEM phenotypes (Supplementary Information section 5.2.3) (**Supplementary**
31 **Table 13–14**). In Add Health, COGA, PNC, and the UKB siblings hold-out cohort, we
32 performed exploratory polygenic score analyses with a wide range of preregistered
33 phenotypes from the behavioral, psychiatric, and socioeconomic research domains

1 (Supplementary Table 16–19). We performed a phenome-wide association study (PheWAS)
2 of medical outcomes in the BioVU biorepository by fitting a logistic regression to 1,335
3 case/control disease “phecodes”¹⁰⁰ ($N = 66,915$) (Supplementary Table 20).

4 We performed within-family analyses in data on full siblings in Add Health, COGA,
5 and the UKB siblings hold-out cohort (Supplementary Information section 5.2.5). We
6 analyzed 492 families in Add Health ($N_{\text{siblings}} = 994$), 621 families in COGA ($N_{\text{siblings}} =$
7 $1,353$), and 19,252 families in the UKB ($N_{\text{siblings}} = 39,640$). In Add Health and COGA, we
8 applied OLS to test the externalizing polygenic score for association with a single outcome:
9 the factor scores of the phenotypic externalizing factor (a continuous variable), while
10 adjusting for family fixed-effects (i.e., family-specific dummy variables) (Supplementary
11 Table 15). We then compared the magnitude of the within-family coefficient ($\hat{\beta}_{WF}$) to the
12 coefficient of an OLS model without family-specific intercepts ($\hat{\beta}$). In the UKB siblings
13 hold-out cohort, we performed an analogous within-family analysis of the exploratory
14 phenotypes (Supplementary Table 19). We analyzed heteroskedasticity-consistent and
15 cluster-robust standard errors, clustered at the family level.

16 Bioannotation

17 We performed a series of bioannotation and bioinformatic analyses to identify
18 relevant biological pathways (Supplementary Information section 6). The method
19 “functional mapping and annotation of genetic associations” (FUMA v1.3.5e)²⁸ was applied
20 to explore the functional consequences of the 579 SNPs (Supplementary Table 9), which
21 included ANNOVAR categories (i.e., the functional consequence of SNPs on genes),
22 Combined Annotation Dependent Depletion (CADD) scores (i.e., a measure of how
23 deleterious a SNP is; $CADD > 12.37$ is classified as deleterious), RegulomeDB scores (i.e., a
24 categorical score from 1a to 7 with 1a corresponding to the most biological evidence that the
25 SNP is a regulatory element), mapping to expression quantitative trait loci (eQTLs), and
26 chromatin states (values range from 1 to 15, with values 1 to 7 referring to an open chromatin
27 state). The sources of the external reference data used by FUMA are described in ref.²⁸.

28 Gene-based association analyses was performed by applying the method “multi-
29 marker analysis of genomic annotation” (MAGMA v1.07)^{28,29} (Supplementary Information
30 sections 6.1.2). The method accounts for LD, which was calculated using reference data from
31 European-ancestry 1000 Genomes participants⁸⁰. Genome-wide SNPs were first mapped to
32 18,093 protein-coding genes from Ensembl (build 85)¹⁰¹, and the SNPs within each gene

1 were then jointly tested for association with *EXT*. We evaluated Bonferroni-corrected
2 significance, adjusted for the number of tested genes (one-sided $P < 2.76 \times 10^{-6}$)
3 (**Supplementary Table 21**). Next, MAGMA gene-set analysis was performed using 15,477
4 curated gene sets and Gene Ontology (GO)¹⁰² terms obtained from the Molecular Signatures
5 Database (MsigDB v7.0)¹⁰³. We evaluated Bonferroni-corrected significance, adjusted for the
6 number of tested gene sets (one-sided $P < 3.23 \times 10^{-6}$) (**Supplementary Table 22**). Lastly, a
7 gene property analysis tested the relationships between 54 tissue-specific gene expression
8 profiles and gene associations, while adjusting for the average expression of genes per tissue
9 type as a covariate (**Supplementary Table 23**), and between brain gene expression profiles
10 and gene associations across 11 brain tissues from BrainSpan¹⁰⁴ (**Supplementary Table 24**).
11 Gene expression values were log₂ transformed average Reads Per Kilobase Million (RPKM)
12 per tissue type (after replacing RPKM > 50 with 50) based on GTEx RNA-seq data¹⁰⁵. We
13 evaluated Bonferroni-corrected significance, adjusted for the number of tested profiles (one-
14 sided $P < 9.26 \times 10^{-4}$).

15 We used an extension of MAGMA: “Hi-C coupled MAGMA” or “H-MAGMA”³⁰, to
16 assign non-coding (intergenic and intronic) SNPs to cognate genes based on their chromatin
17 interactions. Exonic and promoter SNPs were assigned to genes based on physical position.
18 We used four Hi-C datasets provided with the software, derived from adult brain¹⁰⁶, fetal
19 brain¹⁰⁷, and iPSC derived neurons and astrocytes¹⁰⁸. We evaluated Bonferroni-corrected
20 significance, adjusted the number of tests within each of the four Hi-C datasets (one-sided P
21 $< 9.83\text{--}9.86 \times 10^{-7}$) (**Supplementary Tables 25–28**).

22 The method S-PrediXcan v0.6.2¹⁰⁹ was used to analyze the association of *EXT* with
23 gene expression levels in different brain tissues. We used pre-computed tissue weights from
24 the Genotype-Tissue Expression (GTEx, v8) project database as the reference transcriptome
25 dataset¹⁰⁵. As input data, we used the *EXT* summary statistics, LD matrices of the SNPs
26 (available at the PredictDB Data Repository, <http://predictdb.org>), and transcriptome tissue
27 data related to 13 brain tissues: anterior cingulate cortex, amygdala, caudate basal ganglia,
28 cerebellar hemisphere, cerebellum, cortex, frontal cortex, hippocampus, hypothalamus,
29 nucleus accumbens basal ganglia, putamen basal ganglia, spinal cord and substantia nigra.
30 We evaluated transcriptome-wide significance at the two-sided test $P < 2.77 \times 10^{-7}$, which is
31 the Bonferroni-corrected threshold adjusted for 13 tissues times 13,876 tested genes (180,388
32 gene-tissue pairs) (**Supplementary Table 29**). In **Supplementary Table 30** we summarize
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7 discovery analysis) can be obtained by following the procedures detailed at
8 <https://externalizing.org/request-data/>. The summary statistics are derived from analyses
9 based in part on 23andMe data, for which we can only publicly report results for up to 10,000
10 SNPs. The full set of externalizing GWAS summary statistics can be made available to
11 qualified investigators who enter into an agreement with 23andMe that protects participant
12 confidentiality. Once the request has been approved by 23andMe, a representative of the
13 Externalizing Consortium can share the full set of summary statistics. All code necessary to
14 replicate this study is available upon request.

15 **Additional information** Supplementary Information is available for this paper. Online
16 Content Methods, along with any additional Extended Data display items and Source Data,
17 are available in the online version of the paper; references unique to these sections appear
18 only in the online paper. Correspondence and requests for materials should be addressed to
19 Richard Karlsson Linnér at r.karlssonlinner@vu.nl.