Spring 3-31-2022

Past Experiences, Future Problems?

Andrea C. van der Merwe
Belmont University, andy.vandermerwe@pop.belmont.edu

Abstract

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have been shown to negatively impact cognition (Ji and Wang, 2018). ACEs are linked to changes in brain structures and poorer neurocognitive functions across a variety of brain regions (e.g., limbic, hippocampal, prefrontal) and neuropsychological tests (e.g., Stroop Task, Rapid Visual Information Processing, Working Memory, etc…) (Davis et al., 2018; Hawkins et al., 2020; and Irigaray et al., 2013). The current study aims to look at the relationship between ACEs, and cognition to expand current research. We hypothesize that individuals who were subjected to a greater number of ACEs will have lower cognitive function compared to their counterparts who have experienced less ACEs. To test our hypotheses, participants completed the Language Experience and Proficiency Questionnaire (LEAP-Q), ACE Questionnaire for Adults, Trail-making Test, and Short Term Memory Binding Test (STMB). Findings from STMB scores suggest that short term conjunctive memory is impared in those with higher ACEs. This shows that past problems may be related to future problems.

Key Words: Cognition, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Memory