

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Variables

ACES001 – ACES035

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David Fitzgerald

The Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study was conducted by Felitti et al (1998) to study the relationship between adult risk behaviour and childhood exposure to abuse and household dysfunction.

The 3rd survey of the 1989-95 cohort had questions from the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study.

Questionnaire Items

There are 21 items in the questionnaire, ignoring the None of the Aboves. There were only 17 items in the original study but we added a further 4. The original study had four questions about your mother (or step-mother) receiving abuse (items ACES-014, ACES-015, ACES-016, ACES-017 as described below). Our study included these but also added 4 equivalent questions but about your father (or step-father), receiving abuse , (items ACES-019, ACES-020, ACES-021, ACES-022 as described below).

Preamble

The following questions ask about difficult situations you may have experienced.

Some people prefer not to answer questions of this nature.

If this is true for you, please go to the next question.

While you were growing up during your first 18 years of life, did a parent or other adult in the household:

(Mark all that apply)

- Often or very often swear at, insult, or put you down? **ACES-001**
- Often or very often act in a way that made you afraid that you would be physically hurt? **ACES-002**
- Often or very often push, grab, shove, or slap you? **ACES-003**
- Often or very often hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured? **ACES-004**
- None of the above **ACES-005**

While you were growing up during your first 18 years of life, did an adult or person at least 5 years older ever:

(Mark all that apply)

- Touch or fondle you in a sexual way? **ACES-006**
- Have you touch their body in a sexual way? **ACES-007**
- Attempt oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you? **ACES-008**
- Actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you? **ACES-009**
- None of the above **ACES-010**

While you were growing up during your first 18 years of life, did you:
(Mark all that apply)

- Live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic? **ACES-011**
- Live with anyone who used street drugs? **ACES-012**
- None of the above **ACES-013**

While you were growing up during your first 18 years of life, was your mother (or stepmother):

(Mark all that apply)

- Sometimes, often, or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? **ACES-014**
- Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? **ACES-015**
- Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes? **ACES-016**
- Ever threatened with, or hurt by, a knife or gun? **ACES-017**
- None of the above **ACES-018**

While you were growing up during your first 18 years of life, was your father (or stepfather):

(Mark all that apply)

- Sometimes, often, or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at him? **ACES-019**
- Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? **ACES-020**
- Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes? **ACES-021**
- Ever threatened with, or hurt by, a knife or gun? **ACES-022**
- None of the above **ACES-023**

While you were growing up during your first 18 years of life...

(Mark all that apply)

- Was a household member depressed or mentally ill? **ACES-024**
- Did a household member attempt suicide? **ACES-025**
- Did a household member go to prison? **ACES-026**
- None of the above **ACES-027**

Derived Variables

The following derived variables were classified by Felitti et al as:

Psychological Abuse	ACES028	any of ACES001 , ACES002
Physical Abuse	ACES029	any of ACES003 , ACES004
Contact Sexual Abuse	ACES030	any of ACES006 , ACES007, ACES008 , ACES009
Household Substance Abuse	ACES031	any of ACES011 , ACES012
Household Violent treatment of mother/father	ACES032	any of ACES014 , ACES015, ACES016 , ACES017 or any of ACES019 , ACES020, ACES021 , ACES022
Household Mental Illness	ACES033	any of ACES024 , ACES025
Household Criminal behaviour	ACES034	any of ACES026
ACES Score	ACES035	Sum of ACES028 – ACES034

ACES035 is the sum of ACES028 to ACES034. If any of the input items were missing then the ACES035 is also missing.

SAS Code for deriving Adverse Childhood Experiences variables :

```
** ACE, Adverse Childhood Experiences, ** ;

if ACES001 = 1 or ACES002 = 1 then ACES028 = 1 ;
else if ACES001 = 0 and ACES002 = 0 then ACES028 = 0 ;

if ACES003 = 1 or ACES004 = 1 then ACES029 = 1 ;
else if ACES003 = 0 and ACES004 = 0 then ACES029 = 0 ;

if ACES006 = 1 or ACES007 = 1 or ACES008 = 1 or ACES009 = 1 then
ACES030 = 1 ;
else if ACES006 = 0 and ACES007 = 0 and ACES008 = 0 and ACES009 = 0
then ACES030 = 0 ;

if ACES011 = 1 or ACES012 = 1 then ACES031 = 1 ;
else if ACES011 = 0 and ACES012 = 0 then ACES031 = 0 ;

if (ACES014 = 1 or ACES015 = 1 or ACES016 = 1 or ACES017 = 1) or
(ACES019 = 1 or ACES020 = 1 or ACES021 = 1 or ACES022 = 1) then
ACES032 = 1 ;
else if (ACES014 = 0 and ACES015 = 0 and ACES016 = 0 and
ACES017 = 0) and (ACES019 = 0 and ACES020 = 0 and ACES021 = 0 and
ACES022 = 0) then ACES032 = 0 ;

if ACES024 = 1 or ACES025 = 1 then ACES033 = 1 ;
else if ACES024 = 0 and ACES025 = 0 then ACES033 = 0 ;

if ACES026 = 1 then ACES034 = 1 ;
else if ACES026 = 0 then ACES034 = 0 ;

ACES035 = ACES028 + ACES029 + ACES030 + ACES031 + ACES032 + ACES033
+ ACES034 ;
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References

Felitti VJ, Anda RF, Nordenberg D, Williamson DF, Spitz AM, Edwards V, Koss MP, et al. The relationship of adult health status to childhood abuse and household dysfunction. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*. 1998; 14:245-258.