

# Difficult childhoods lead to teenage drinking

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An African study has found a link between a difficult childhood and alcohol consumption as a teenager. Researchers writing in BioMed Central's open access journal *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health* studied the association between adverse childhood experiences and drunkenness among 9,189 adolescents aged 12-19 years living in Burkina Faso, Ghana, Malawi, and Uganda.

Dr. Caroline Kabiru and a team of researcher from the African Population and Health Research Center , Nairobi, Kenya conducted the study. They noted, "Overall, 9% of adolescents reported that they had been drunk in the 12 months preceding the survey. In general, respondents who had lived in a food-insecure household, lived with a problem drinker, been physically abused, or been coerced into having sex were more likely to report drunkenness".

There has previously been little research into the determinants of alcohol use among adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. The researchers' work is supported by similar studies in other parts of the world, which also draw a link between adverse childhood experiences and future drinking. Speaking about the findings, Dr. Kabiru said, "Early treatment for traumatic childhood experiences may be an essential component of interventions designed to prevent [alcohol abuse](#) among [adolescents](#)".

**More information:** Self-reported drunkenness among adolescents in four sub-Saharan African countries: associations with adverse childhood experiences, Caroline W Kabiru, Donatien Beguy, Joanna Crichton and Alex C Ezeh, *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health* 2010,

4:17 [doi:10.1186/1753-2000-4-17](https://doi.org/10.1186/1753-2000-4-17)

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