

# Adverse childhood experiences linked to migraine in adolescence

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Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are associated with migraine

onset in adolescence, according to a study published online Feb. 5 in *Headache: The Journal of Head and Face Pain*.

Using data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, Nicole G. Hammond, from the University of Ottawa in Canada, and colleagues examined whether ACEs are prospectively associated with incident health professional-diagnosed migraine and prevalence of nonmigraine frequent headache in adolescence. Children aged 0/1 year at baseline were followed by the person most knowledgeable (PMK) about them until the child reached adolescence. The PMK reported on 14 ACEs when the child was 4/5 and 6/7 years and reported on depression and [anxiety symptoms](#) in late childhood (age 8/9 years). The analyses of migraine and nonmigraine frequent headache, which were measured at age 14/15 years, included 2,058 and 1,730 children, respectively.

The researchers found that 3.4% of children had migraine and 11.8% had nonmigraine frequent headache. Overall, 55.7, 34.7, and 9.6% experienced no ACEs, one ACE, and two or more ACEs, respectively. Direct associations were seen between experiencing one and two or more ACEs with migraine (odds ratios, 1.71 and 2.33, respectively), but not for nonmigraine frequent headache. No indirect associations were seen for symptoms of depression and anxiety with migraine or nonmigraine frequent [headache](#).

"The lack of a mediational effect through symptoms of depression and anxiety suggests that, on their own, internalizing symptoms do not entirely explain the ACE-[migraine](#) link, at least in adolescence," the authors write.

**More information:** Nicole G. Hammond et al, Adverse childhood experiences and onset of migraine in Canadian adolescents: A cohort study, *Headache: The Journal of Head and Face Pain* (2022). [DOI](#):

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