

Adverse childhood experiences tied to later household firearm ownership

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Cumulative adverse childhood experience (ACE) exposure is associated with higher odds of household firearm ownership in adulthood, according to a study [published](#) online Aug. 15 in *JAMA Network Open*.

Alexander Testa, Ph.D., from the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, and colleagues used [survey data](#) from 1,709 adults from the 2022 Nevada Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System to examine the association between ACEs and household firearm ownership among U.S. adults.

The researchers found that household firearm ownership was lowest among respondents with no ACEs (30.8%) and highest among those with four or more ACEs (49.8%). There was a significant association between having multiple ACEs and household firearm ownership compared with no ACEs. For specific ACE items, household illegal drug use (adjusted odds ratio, 1.57) and [verbal abuse](#) (adjusted odds ratio, 1.54) were associated with household firearm ownership. The association of four or more ACEs and household firearm ownership was significantly similar among females and males.

"The relationship may be due to a heightened sense of vulnerability to [physical violence](#) and greater perceived threats to [personal safety](#) associated with a traumatic childhood, which lead individuals to seek self-protection," the authors write.

More information: Alexander Testa et al, Adverse Childhood Experiences and Adult Household Firearm Ownership, *JAMA Network Open* (2024). [DOI: 10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.28027](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamanetworkopen.2024.28027)

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