

From intra-familial childhood adversities to tobacco use: Assessing the mediating role of bullying victimization among Tunisian adolescents

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P 1 – C 18

Urgent need to address IF-ACEs and bullying in interventions targeting tobacco use prevention among Tunisian adolescents.



BACKGROUND

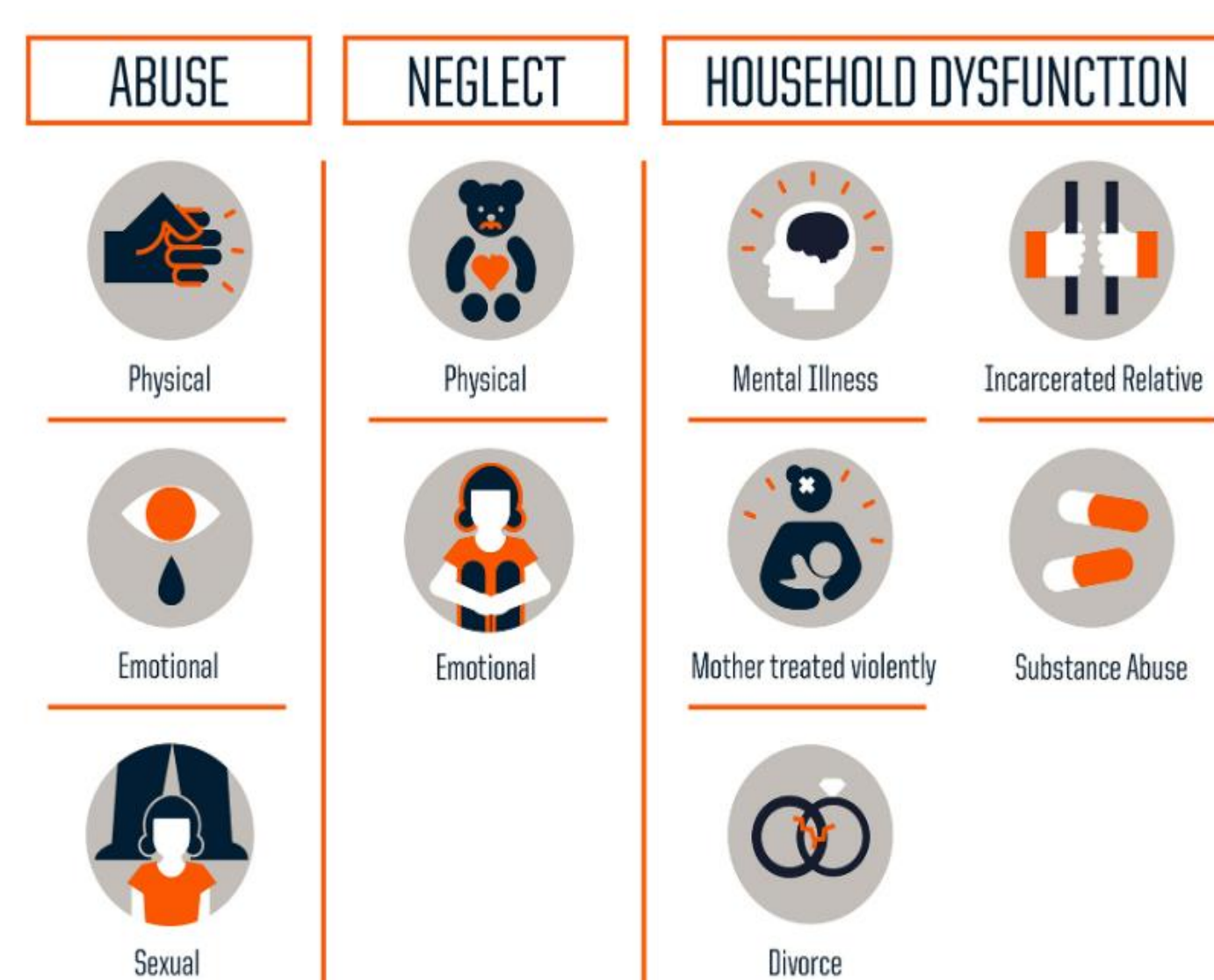
- Although numerous studies have examined the association between various risk factors and tobacco use, limited research has focused on **the role of Intra-Familial Adverse Childhood Experiences (IF-ACEs)** in the onset of this pervasive threat.
- **The sequential role of bullying victimization** in this relationship remains also largely unexplored.
- We aimed to assess **the mediating effect of exposure to bullying** in the link between on IF-ACEs and tobacco smoking among schooled youth in Tunisia.

RESULTS

- A total of 2354 returned the questionnaire, with a mean age of 17.3±1.5 years old and a sex ratio of 0.5.
- Among them, 89.9% suffered from IF-ACEs. Nearly the half were current smokers.
- Exposure to bullying and cyberbullying victimization were respectively reported among 62.5% and 33.1% of schooled youth.
- A dose-response relationship between IF-ACEs and tobacco use also was uncovered.

METHODS

- From January to February 2020, we conducted a cross sectional study in secondary schools located in
- Through a random cluster sampling, we selected fours classes from each educational level.
- ACEs International Questionnaire
- Current tobacco and E-cigarette smoking.
- Mediation analyses was performed by SPSS-PROCESS macro developed by Andrew Hayes.



Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Credit: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Table : The dose-response relationship between IF-ACEs and tobacco use: Regression analysis with 95% confidence intervals

	Crude odds ratio (IC)	Adjusted for gender	Adjusted for family and friends tobacco use
Tobacco use			
0-1 ACEs	-	-	-
2-4 ACEs	1.80 (1.36-2.37)**	1.71 (1.27-2.30)**	1.66 (1.21-2.22)*
5-6 ACEs	2.36 (1.65-3.37)**	2.40 (1.63-3.54)**	2.33 (1.57-3.46)*

*: p < 0.01, **: p < 0.001

- We found a **21% mediation effect** of bullying victimization for IF-ACEs and tobacco use relationship (p<0.001), controlling for gender, family and peers tobacco consumption. A higher mediating effect was found among females (% mediation 26.2 vs .17.3 among males).

CONCLUSIONS

- Our findings emphasize the **urgent need to address IF-ACEs and bullying in interventions targeting tobacco use prevention among Tunisian adolescents.**

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Figure 1: The conceptual link between IF-ACEs and tobacco use, with exposure to bullying as a mediating factor

