

Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Alcohol Use in Native American Young Adults: A Systematic Review



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Introduction

Alcohol and its effect on the human body has been well studied, but the causes of alcohol use have not been well studied. Alcohol use has been studied in some Native American tribes and communities, showing that on average alcohol use is higher in this population. There have been studies examining what causes higher alcohol use, but results are inconclusive.

A new area of study has emerged that examines how exposure to Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) as a child affects health and behavior as the child ages. There have been very few studies examining the link between exposure to ACEs and alcohol use in Native American young adults.

This review aims to compile existing studies to determine how significant exposure to ACEs is to alcohol use in Native American youth.

Methods

Articles were selected through PubMed database.

Participants had to be either self-reported or a registered member of a Native American tribe.

The exposure had to be any type of ACE
The outcome had to be any form of alcohol use.

7 articles were selected for the review.



Image 1: A healthy Native American family



Image 2: The effects of alcohol use

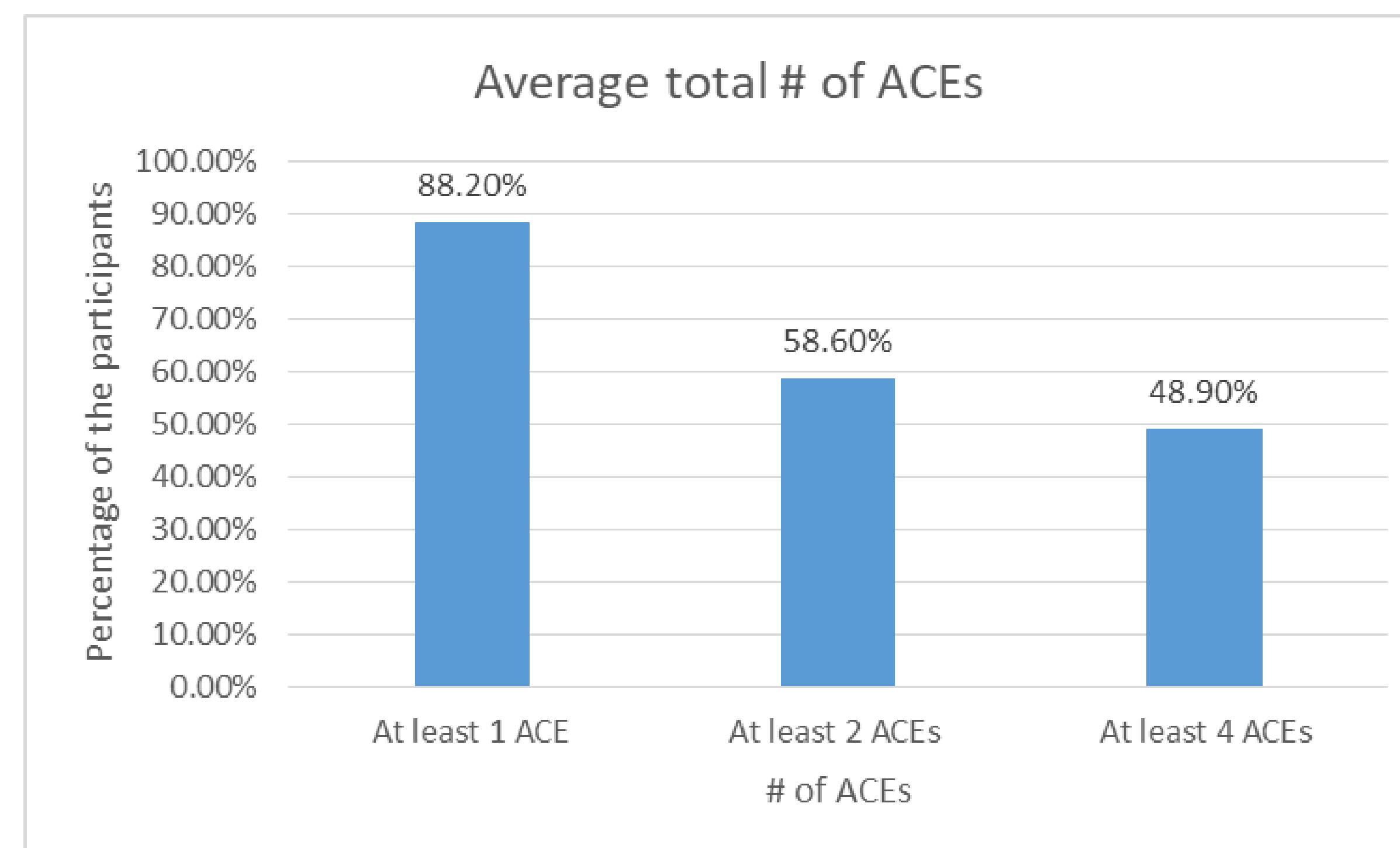


Table 1: Average total number of ACEs

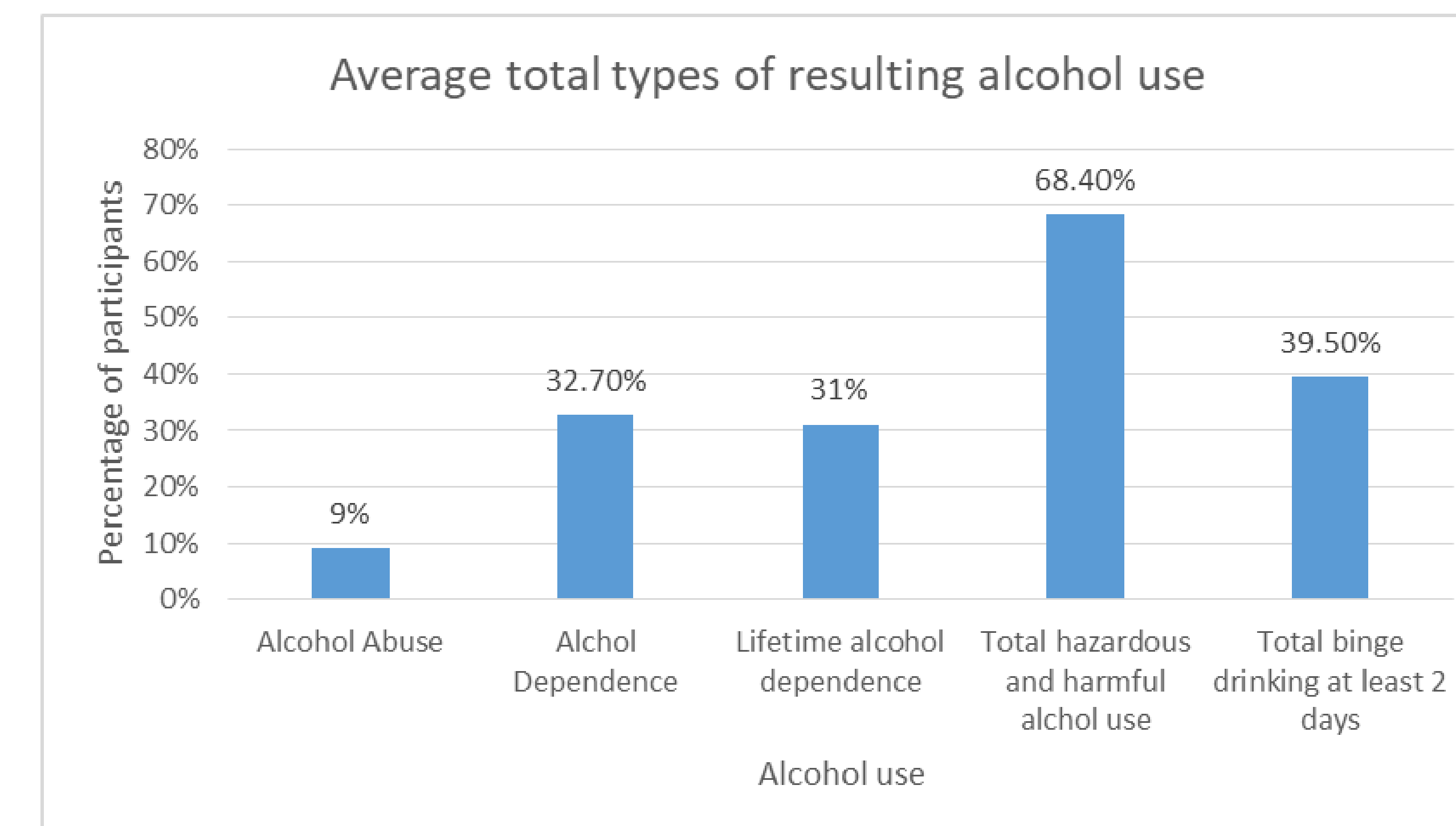


Table 2: Average total types of resulting alcohol use

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Results

Results from this review suggest that exposure to ACEs is a significant risk factor for developing any type of alcohol use behavior.

Four of the seven articles used an ACE questionnaire and three articles studied childhood exposures which can be found on an ACE questionnaire.

Every article looked at different forms of alcohol use such as alcohol abuse, alcohol dependence, alcohol binge drinking, hazardous and harmful alcohol use, drunkenness, excessive drinking, and poly-drug use.

Public Health Implications

ACE's are strongly related to alcohol use, which can last a lifetime if not treated properly. Health programs should focus on treating those who have been exposed to ACEs through a trauma informed and culturally appropriate manner.

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