

A Weekly FAX from the Center for Substance Abuse Research

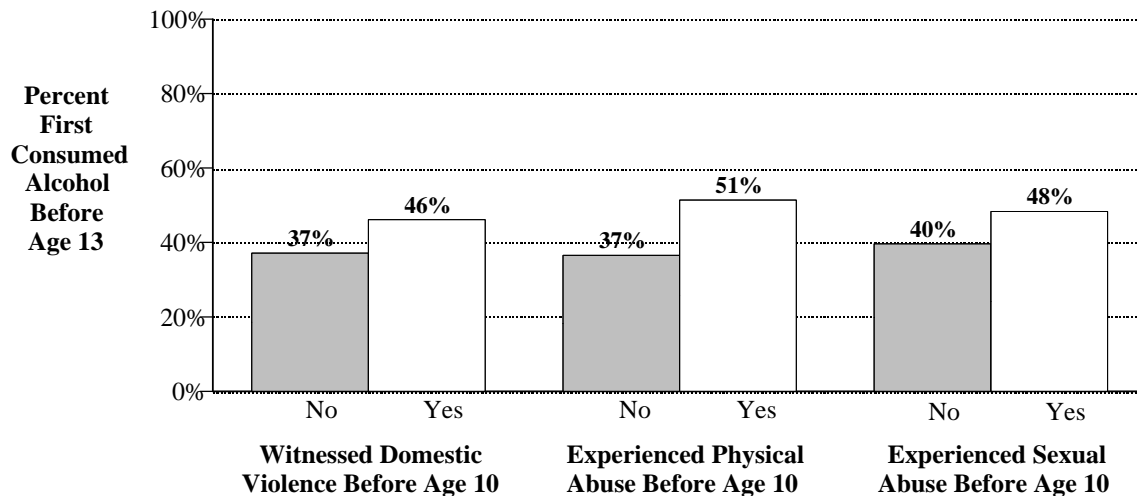
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Youths Who Witness or Experience Abuse as a Child More Likely to Drink Before Age 13

Exposure to abuse as a young child is related to early alcohol initiation, according to a survey of public school students attending schools in a high-risk urban area. Youths who reported experiencing physical or sexual abuse before age 10 were more likely than those who had not to begin drinking alcohol before age 13 (see figure below). Furthermore, youths who reported witnessing domestic violence between their parents/guardians were also more likely to begin drinking at an early age, at a rate similar to those youths reporting direct abuse. According to the authors, these findings suggest that the “prevention and treatment of the negative impact of early child maltreatment may delay and reduce alcohol use” p. 291.

**Percentage of Public School Students Reporting First Drinking
Alcohol Before Age 13, by Childhood Exposure to Abuse***

(N=3,559)



*The Youth Violence Survey was a cross-sectional survey of all public school students enrolled in grades 7, 9, 11, and 12 in a school district in a high-risk urban community conducted in 2004.

SOURCE: Adapted by CESAR from Hamburger, M.E., Leeb, R.T., and Swahn, M.H. “Childhood Maltreatment and Early Alcohol Use Among High-Risk Adolescents,” *Journal of Studies of Alcohol and Drugs* 69(2):291-295, 2008.

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