

The Australian Child Maltreatment Study:

Findings on the association between
child maltreatment and suicide.

Family and Community Services Insights, Analysis and
Research (FACSIAR), NSW Dept of Communities and
Justice 26 Sept 2023

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How we did the ACMS



Nationwide cross-sectional survey

- Informed by systematic review and analysis
- Computer-assisted telephone interviews
- Random sample of the population



8500 Participants aged 16 and over

3500 Adolescents/young adults aged 16-24

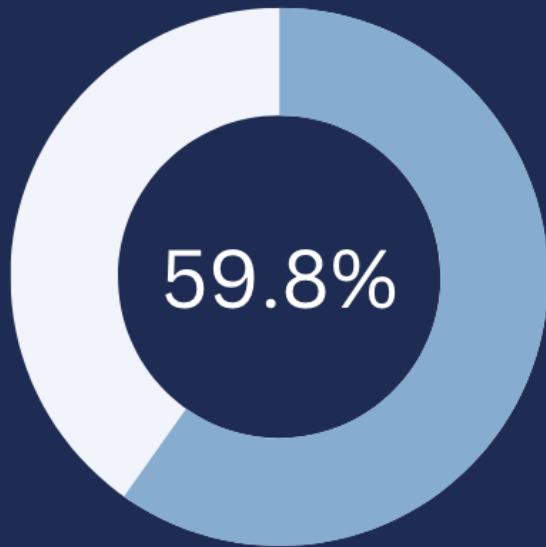
Enables future Wave Studies, Cohort Study

5000 Adults aged 25+

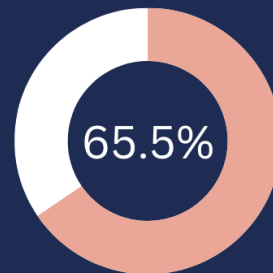
1000 adults in 5 strata (25-34, 35-44, 45-54, 55-64, 65+)
Enables measurement of health through life



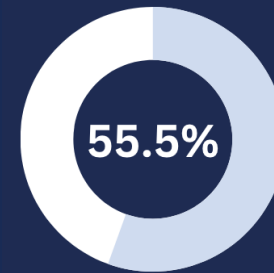
Child maltreatment is disturbingly common in young people 16-24



59.8% of young Australians have experienced 1 or more types of maltreatment



Women



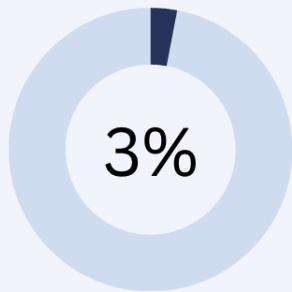
Men

Prevalence of maltreatment in young Australians aged 16-24

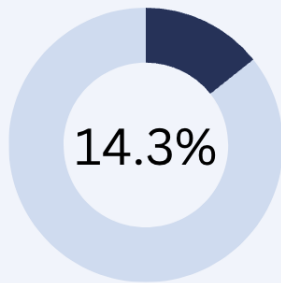


40.2% experience multi-type maltreatment

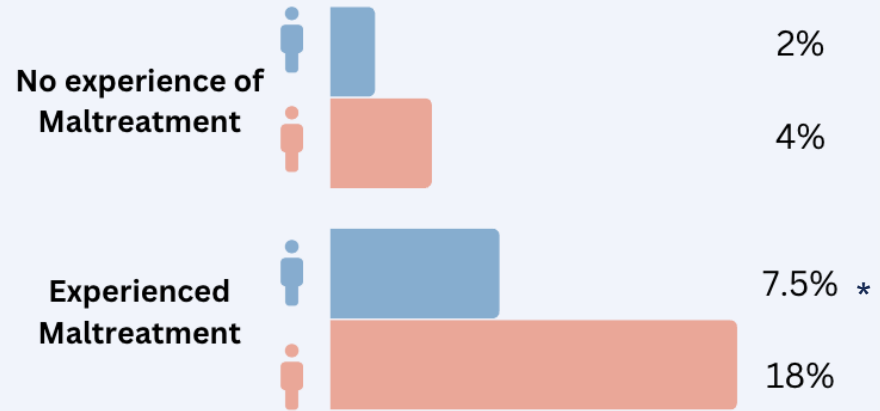
Clear associations between maltreatment and past year self-harm in young people 16-24 years



Of young people without CM report self-harm in past 12 months



Of young people * with CM report self-harm in past 12 months

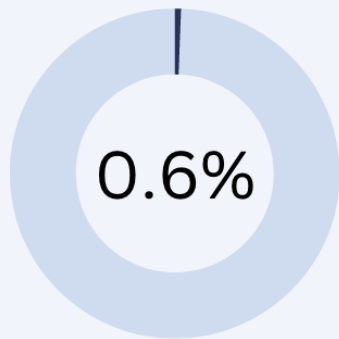


Question

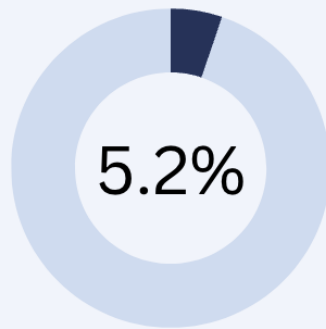
Have you ever deliberately harmed or injured yourself, without intending to take your own life?

Has this happened in the past year?

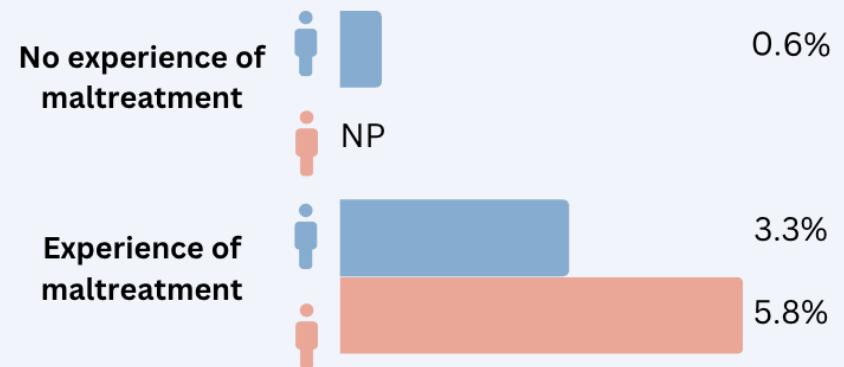
Clear associations between maltreatment and past year suicide attempts



Of young people without CM report suicide attempt in past 12 months



Of young people with CM report suicide in past 12 months





Question:

Have you ever attempted suicide?
Has this happened in the past year?

Gender effects on health risk behaviours by maltreatment status (odds ratios)

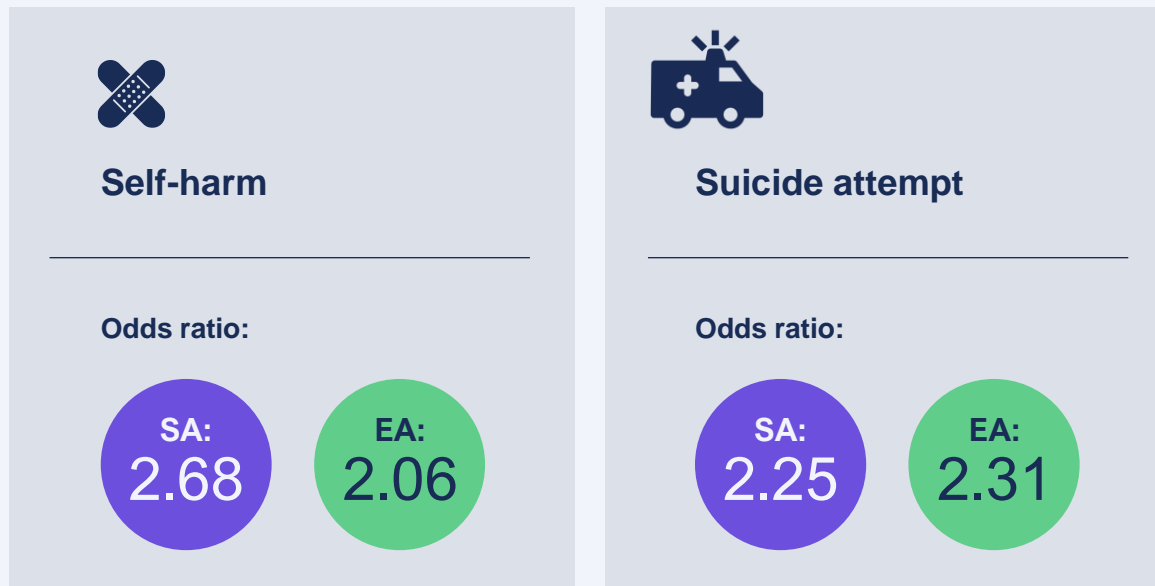


		Men	Women	All
	Self harm (prior year)	3.9	3.9	3.9
	Suicide attempt (prior year)	3.3	6.5	4.6

>1 represents increased likelihood compared to those with no maltreatment



Sexual abuse and emotional abuse produce the strongest associations with self-harm and suicide



All ages controlling for other forms of maltreatment

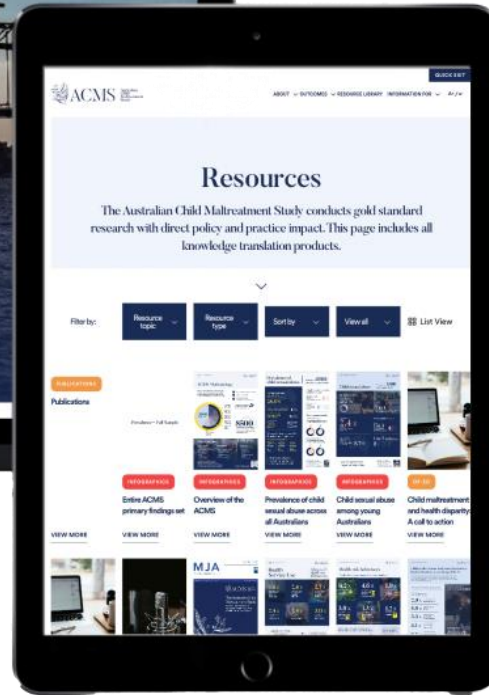
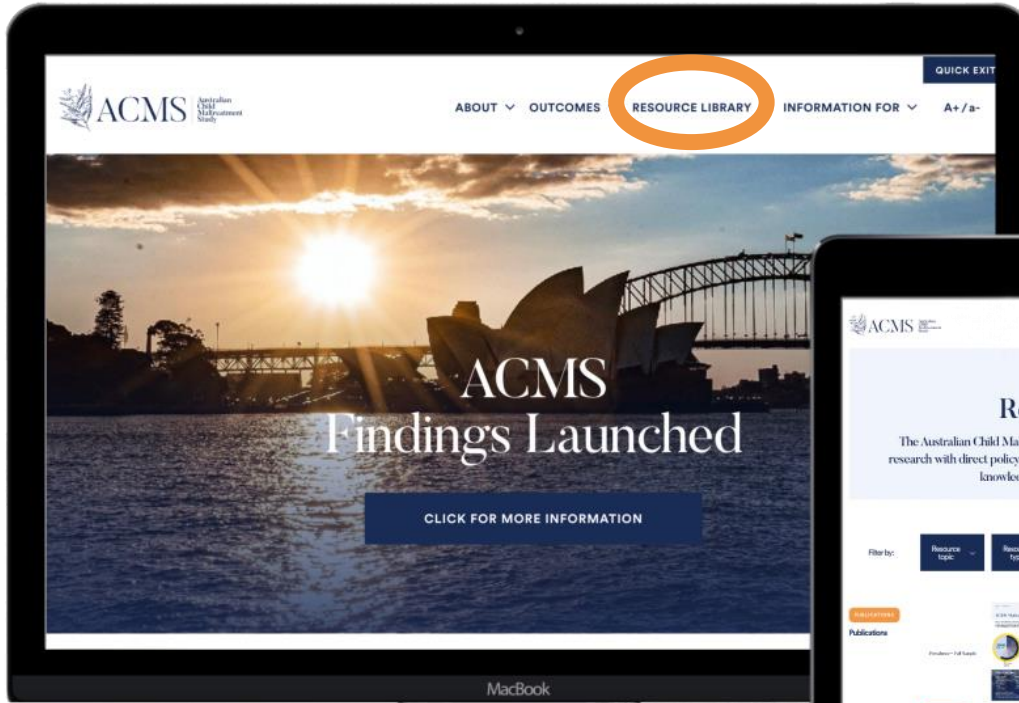
Implications

- Child maltreatment highly related to self-harm and suicide attempts
- Strong gender effects differentially impact girls and women
- Child sexual abuse and emotional abuse particularly harmful
- Prevention of child maltreatment should form an important part of self harm and suicide prevention initiatives. Highly likely to have experienced maltreatment
- Importance of assessment and trauma informed mental health support for children under child protection orders



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Resource Library



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