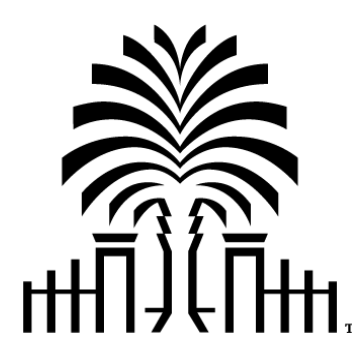




Adverse Childhood Experiences and Mental Health on a Two-Year College Campus

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Background and Rationale

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include 10 types of abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction that can occur in a child's life before the age of 18.
- While the relationship between ACEs and mental health is well-researched in general, there is a lack of research focusing on this population: students enrolled on two-year college campuses.
- Research shows that low-income students are more likely to have higher ACE scores and that there is a correlation between a higher ACE score and level of depression, anxiety.

Research Questions

- How prevalent are Adverse Childhood Experiences in students on a two-year college campus?
- What are the average levels of depression, anxiety and disordered eating in two-year college campus students?
- Is there a significant correlation between ACE score and depression, anxiety or disordered eating in students on a two-year college campus?
- Is there a significant correlation between ACE score and annual household income among two-year college students?

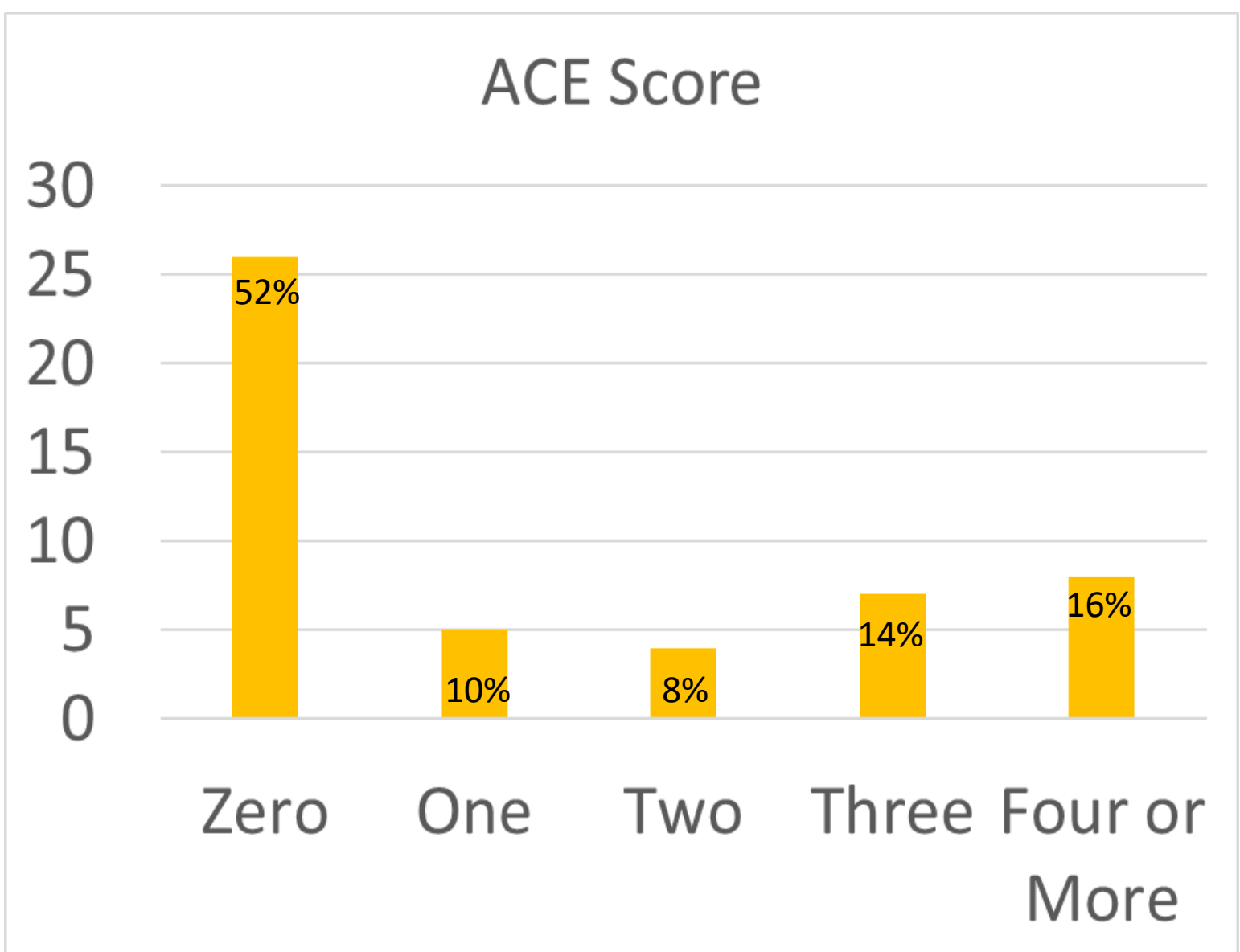
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Results

- Prevalence of ACEs in the sample are shown in the following chart. Notable differences between the sample and national averages exist. Ten percent more students from the two-year campus report zero ACEs than the national average, whereas more students in the sample report three or more (30% vs. 21.5%).
- Perhaps the most troubling findings of the study were the average scores of students on the measures of depression and anxiety, regardless of trauma history. The average score on the CES-D was 18.2. Professionals assessing for clinical depression use a score of 16 as a clinically significant cutoff. The average score on the STAI-S was 42.1, with a commonly used clinical cutoff level of 40 for anxiety disorders. The average score of disordered eating (EAT-26) was 11.5, which was less than the clinical cutoff of 16.
- Significant correlations were found between ACE score and depression, anxiety, and annual income. The correlation between ACE score and disordered eating was nonsignificant.
- We plan to expand this study by surveying additional two-year college campuses.

Variable	Pearson correlation coefficient	p-value	df
Depression Score	0.47	<.001	48
Anxiety Score	0.42	0.002	48
Disordered Eating	0.23	0.11	48
Annual Income	-0.40	0.004	47



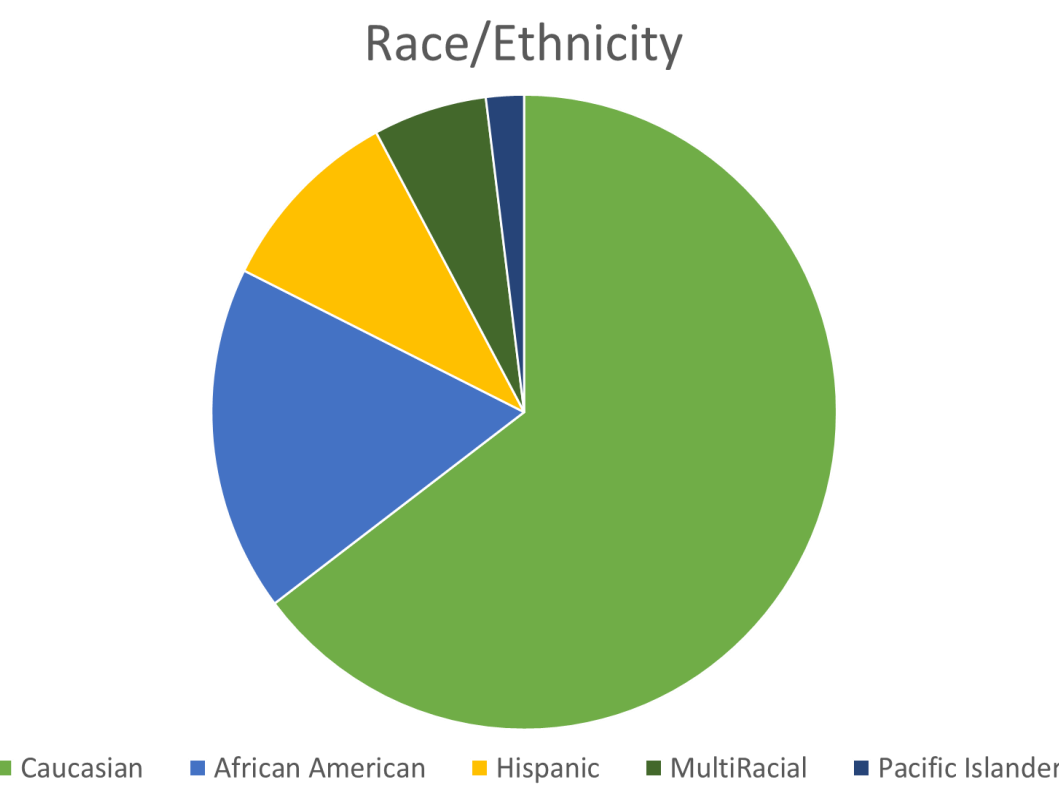
Implications

- Student Mental Health services should be a top priority for administration on two-year college campuses.
- Faculty would be well-served to have trauma-informed pedagogical strategies when teaching on two-year campuses as the prevalence of complex trauma may be higher among their students.
- Mental Health awareness and advocacy for students on two-year college campuses should be highlighted due to both the clinical levels of anxiety and depression that were found as well as the high percentage of students with 3 or more ACEs.

Methods

Participants

- Data for this study were collected from 56 students from a rural, 2-year college campus. Six surveys were excluded for improper responses or participants under the age of 18 (n=50). The majority of participants were female (70%). Race breakdown was representative of the population:



Measures

Adverse childhood experiences and mental health on a two-year college campus was assessed with 4 measures:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Questionnaire: yes/no responses to the 10 ACEs.
- Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale (CES-D; NIMH). Sample item: "I felt that everything I did was an effort," on a 4-point Likert scale.
- Eating Attitudes Test (EAT-26). Sample item: "Avoid eating when I am hungry," on a 6-point Likert scale.
- State-Trait Anxiety Inventory for Adults (STAI-S; Spielberger). Sample Item: "I feel nervous," on a 4-point Likert scale.



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