



Working Group on the Quality of Childhood

Trauma Treatment of Children

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EMDR EUROPE ASSOCIATION



- 32 national associations in Europe
- 25'000 individual members + more trained professionals
- Psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists.
- Continuous strong growth of the association
- Yearly conferences (ca. 800 persons)
- European standards for practice, research & education in EMDR
- Supports : - research on EMDR
- Supports: - EMDR training
 - in low income countries in Europe
 - in low income countries outside Europe

TRAUMA

strict and broad definition

STRICT DEFINITION in the diagnostic manuals « T – Trauma »

- **Exposure** to actual or threatened **death, serious injury, or sexual violence.**

BROAD DEFINITION « t – trauma »

- the **psychological consequence** of highly stressful event(s)
provoking a feeling of **helplessness**
and causing a **breakdown of the usual coping skills** of the child.

t - trauma : not that « small » ...

- Disturbing experiences regarding interpersonal relationships, where the relationship causes suffering:
 - Humiliation,
 - Psychological violence
 - Violent interactions with caregivers
 - Difficulties with peers
 - Learning difficulties
 - Neglect
 - Etc.
- Have a great impact on the development of the child.

Adverse Childhood Experiences

ABUSE



Physical



Emotional



Sexual

NEGLECT



Physical



Emotional

HOUSEHOLD DYSFUNCTION



Mental Illness



Incarcerated Relative



Mother treated violently



Substance Abuse



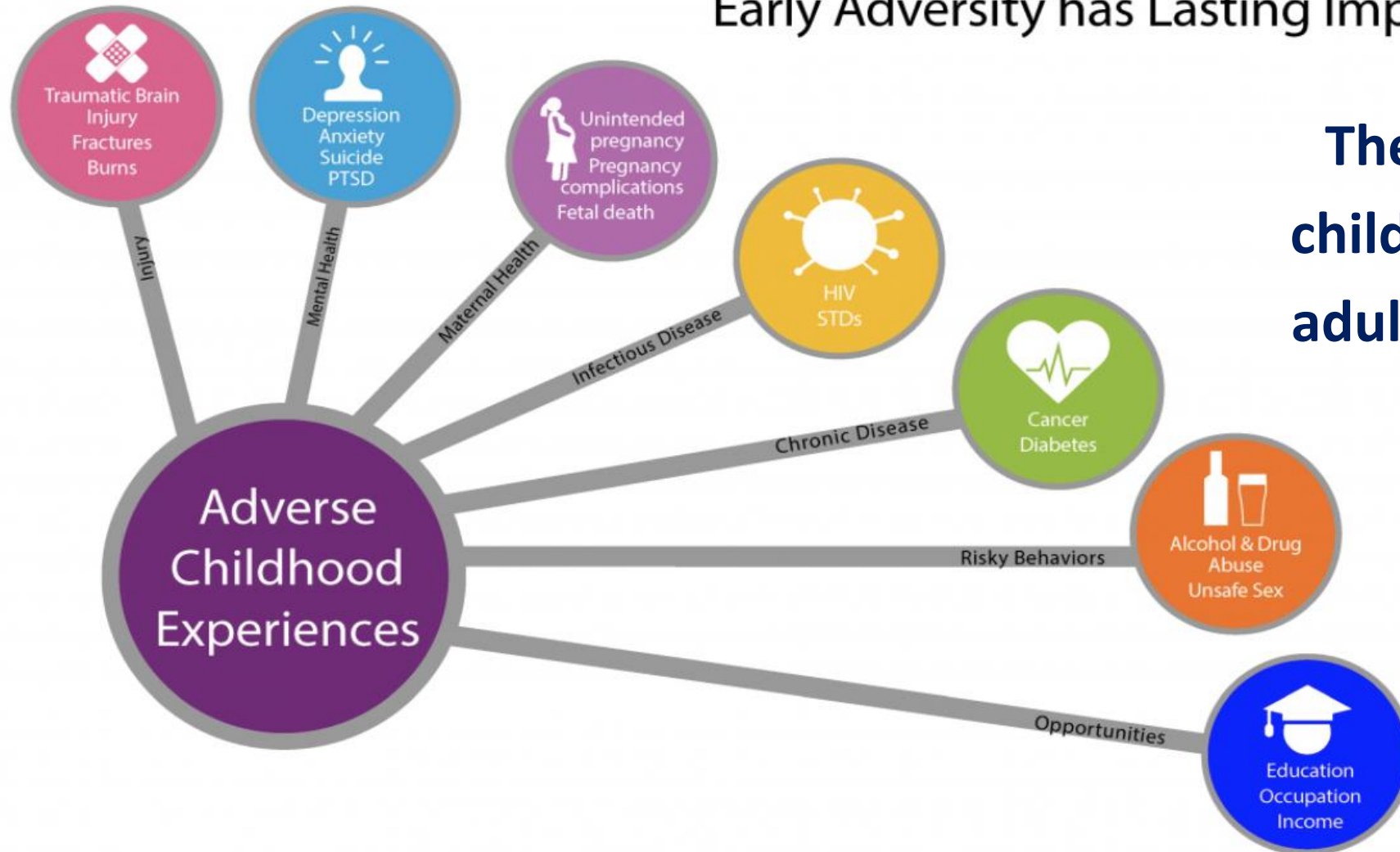
Divorce

**Before the
age of 18**

Researchers :
- **Felitti**
- **Anda**

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Early Adversity has Lasting Impacts



The impact of negative childhood experiences on adult health is strong and cumulative.

(Felitti et al., 2012)

Adverse Childhood Experiences

**Relationship
between early
childhood
trauma and
health and
well-being
problems
later in life.**

**Source: World Health
Organization**

Death



Birth



Not simply statistics but real stories

"The sexual abuse finished when I was 12 years old, but shame, anger and fear have been present during all my life"

"I have been told that I was a failure, and I have always failed"

Effects on neuro-physiological mechanisms

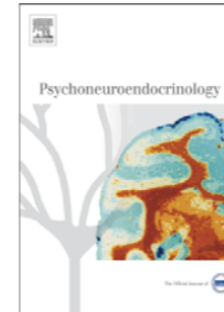
Psychoneuroendocrinology (2008) 33, 693–710



Available at www.sciencedirect.com



journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/psyncen



CURT P. RICHTER AWARD PAPER

The link between childhood trauma and depression: Insights from HPA axis studies in humans

Christine Heim*, D. Jeffrey Newport, Tanja Mletzko,
Andrew H. Miller, Charles B. Nemeroff

«Childhood trauma in humans is associated with

- **sensitization of the neuroendocrine stress response,**
- **glucocorticoid resistance, increased central corticotropin-releasing factor (CRF) activity,**
- **immune activation,**
- **and reduced hippocampal volume,**

closely paralleling several of the neuroendocrine features of depression»

Effects on epigenetic modifications

Citation: *Transl Psychiatry* (2011) 1, e59, doi:10.1038/tp.2011.60
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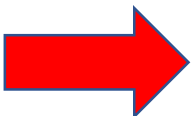
www.nature.com/tp

Increased methylation of glucocorticoid receptor gene (*NR3C1*) in adults with a history of childhood maltreatment: a link with the severity and type of trauma

N Perroud¹, A Paoloni-Giacobino², P Prada³, E Olié^{4,5,6}, A Salzmann¹, R Nicastro³, S Guillaume^{4,5,6}, D Mouthon², C Stouder², K Dieben³, P Huguelet³, P Courtet^{4,5,6} and A Malafosse^{1,2}

Childhood maltreatment, through epigenetic modification of the glucocorticoid receptor gene (*NR3C1*), influences the hypothalamic–pituitary–adrenal axis (HPA axis). We investigated whether childhood maltreatment and its severity were associated with increased methylation of the exon 1_F *NR3C1* promoter, in 101 borderline personality disorder (BPD) and 99 major depressive disorder (MDD) subjects with, respectively, a high and low rate of childhood maltreatment, and 15 MDD subjects with comorbid post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Childhood sexual abuse, its severity and the number of type of maltreatments positively correlated with *NR3C1* methylation ($P = 6.16 \times 10^{-8}$, 5.18×10^{-7} and 1.25×10^{-9} , respectively). In BPD, repetition of abuses and sexual abuse with penetration correlated with a higher methylation percentage. Peripheral blood might therefore serve as a proxy for environmental effects on epigenetic processes. These findings suggest that early life events may permanently impact on the HPA axis through epigenetic modifications of the *NR3C1*. This is a mechanism by which childhood maltreatment may lead to adulthood psychopathology.

Translational Psychiatry (2011) 1, e59; doi:10.1038/tp.2011.60; published online 13 December 2011



**Maltreatment, neglect, physical & sexual abuse
on children and adolescents**

are a PANDEMIC

Some good news but still so much to be done





Molecular
Psychiatry

Article | Published: 23 October 2019

Successful treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder reverses DNA methylation marks

**Treatment :
EMDR & CBT**

Christiaan H. Vinkers , Elbert Geuze, Sanne J. H. van Rooij, Mitzy Kennis, Remmelt R. Schür, Danny M. Nispeling, Alicia K. Smith, Caroline M. Nievergelt, Monica Uddin, Bart P. F. Rutten, Eric Vermetten & Marco P. Boks 

Molecular Psychiatry (2019) | [Cite this article](#)

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What is EMDR ?



- A comprehensive, integrative psychotherapy approach
 - focused on the reprocessing of memories
 - of stressful and traumatic experiences,
 - as well as on enhancing positive resources.
- ✓ With positive effects on present symptoms and anticipations for the future

Developed by Francine Shapiro PhD (USA)

What is EMDR ?

- Protocol developed through 30 years of research
- Model of an **Adaptive Information Processing (AIP)**
- Target the traumatic memory with **bilateral sensory stimulations**
- Unblock the AIP which was overwhelmed by the trauma
- Towards an **adaptive resolution of the trauma**

What is EMDR ?



Positive effects on:

- ✓ Emotions related to the distressing event
- ✓ Cognitions and beliefs about self, others and the world
- ✓ Somatic sensations and sensorimotor reactions
- ✓ Overall decrease of disturbance
- ✓ Positive anticipation of the future

Recent research on the neurophysiology of EMDR



- EMDR does not add a new positive memory to compensate the traumatic memory and its effects.
- EMDR seems to neutralize the traumatic memory **at its core** :
 - «memory reconsolidation»
 - ✓ Better long term results
 - ✓ Better reduction of the effects of trauma on the personality

From research to recognition of EMDR worldwide by the scientific community



World Health Organization (2013):

EMDR and trauma-focused cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) are **the only therapies recommended for children, adolescents, and adults with PTSD.**

EMDR is also recommended by the:

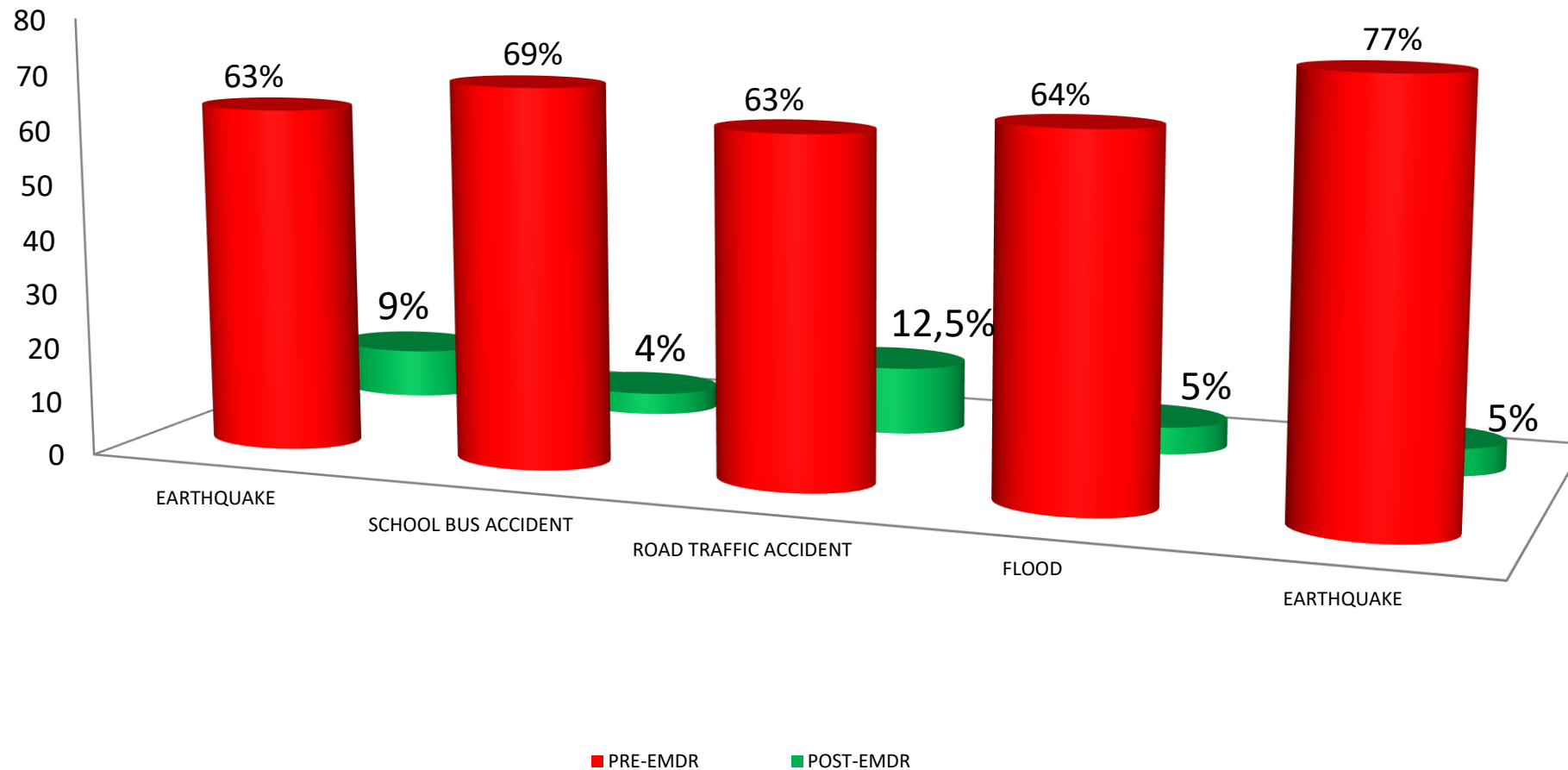
- National Institute of Clinical Excellence (UK)
- Veterans Affairs Dept. of Defense (USA)
- International Society for Traumatic Stress Studies
- American Psychiatric Association

EMDR with children



- ✓ Early EMDR interventions (earthquake, terrorist attack, refugees)
 - ✓ Sexual violence
 - ✓ Domestic violence
 - ✓ Other Adverse Childhood Experiences
 - ✓ Bullism
 - ✓ Physical diseases
 - ✓ Attachment trauma and neglect
- Taking into consideration the context of the family and school.

Results of early EMDR interventions in Italy



Summary on EMDR for CHILDREN



- Spontaneous resilience is not possible or not enough for many children.
- Treating properly children is **CHEAPER** than treating them as adults later.
- EMDR is **EFFECTIVE, BRIEF and USEFUL** in treating severe distress subsequent to experiences of overwhelming terror, loss and despair in children.
- Besides the trauma processing, EMDR treatment enhances the child's **RESOURCES, REDUCES STRESS and NORMALIZES BEHAVIOURS.**

Recommendations from the perspective of EMDR Europe association



- Invest **MUCH MORE** in mental health and trauma/ACE treatments for children
- This will save **MUCH MORE LIVES** and will save **MONEY**.
- Promote among professionals **EVIDENCE BASED TREATMENTS** such as **EMDR** and the knowledge about **CHILDHOOD ADVERSITIES** and their effects on **ADULT PATHOLOGIES**.
- In :
 - ✓ **UNIVERSITIES,**
 - ✓ **POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION,**
 - ✓ **PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrH6xy3snTk>