



THE UNIVERSITY
of NORTH CAROLINA
at CHAPEL HILL

Effects of Parental Substance Use on Children's Cognitive and Educational Outcomes

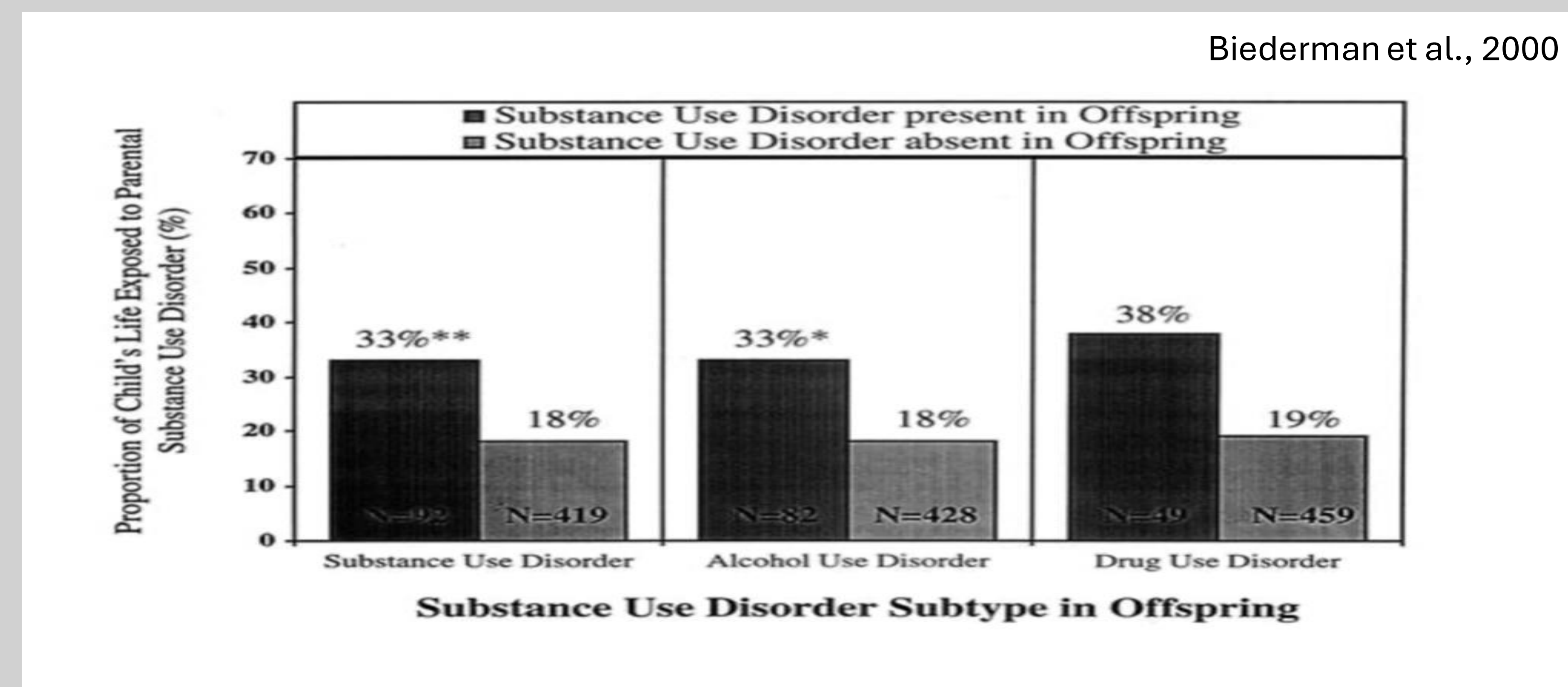
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THE FAMILY JOURNEYS CO-LAB

Introduction

- Parental substance use has an overall negative effect on children's health and wellbeing¹⁶
- Children of alcoholics are at a particular risk for an accelerated trajectory from drinking initiation to alcoholism¹⁰
- Children born to mothers with parental opioid use disorder have an increased risk of childhood neglect, abuse, and negative outcomes in later adulthood²¹



Strengths and Limitations

- **Strengths:**
 - Present literature includes studies conducted in multiple countries, allowing for generalizability and knowledge on negative child outcomes stemming from parental substance use
 - This present review utilizes previous literature reviews on the relevant topics, providing background knowledge to the discussion
- **Limitations:**
 - Sample participants were predominantly Caucasian, limiting sample diversity and result generalizability
 - There was an exclusion of substance types being measured such as amphetamines and benzodiazepines, both under-researched across articles

Educational Outcomes for Children with Parental Substance Use

- **Childhood Outcomes:**
 - Children of alcoholics are twice as likely to repeat a school grade and nine times at higher risk for lower school performance compared to peers¹⁶
 - Children that have experienced grade repetition have lower reading and mathematics test scores, lower perceived competence, and a higher rate of delinquency than compared to peers of their same age¹⁷
 - The mean grade of students with non-alcoholic parents is 0.75 points above the average grade attained by children of alcoholics³
- **Later Implications:**
 - There is a linkage between school failure at 15 years of age and later illicit drug use⁸
 - Children who experience grade repetition are more than twice as likely to report delinquent involvement six years later¹

Future Directions

- Further assess the differences in child outcomes based on severity of parental substance use which would likely yield worse outcomes as severity of parental substance use increases
- Further research on child outcomes dependent on parental choice of substances, such as benzodiazepines and amphetamines
- Additional research encompassing multiple races and cultures to yield increased representation and generalizable outcomes

Cognitive Outcomes for Children with Parental Substance Use

- **Childhood Outcomes:**
 - Children with paternal substance use show higher rates of mental co-morbidity with mental health disorders including ADHD, conduct disorder, major depressive disorder, and anxiety disorders⁵
 - Preschool aged children with mothers in methadone maintenance display greater hyperactivity, increased disruptiveness, lower intelligence scores, and worse socially adaptive behaviors compared to other preschool aged children²¹
 - Children born to mothers with opioid use disorder display increased levels of disorganized attachment at 12 months of age and were overall less likely to seek parental contact²¹
- **Later Implications:**
 - Cognitive ability is a great predictor for multiple life outcomes such as education, occupation, mental and physical wellbeing, and mortality¹⁹
 - Avoidant attachment styles in childhood may influence aspects of adulthood such as heightened conflict in romantic relationships¹⁵

Conclusion

- This literature review furthers the discussion on negative outcomes for children with parental substance use
- Due to the present findings, further research is needed to explore a wider range of substances, ethnic cultures, and severities of use
- Increased research on this topic area will allow researchers to better understand and focus in on where these negative child outcomes are stemming from

Full Paper:



References:

