

The national prevalence of childhood corporal punishment and associated mental health outcomes

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<https://www.australianchildmaltreatmentstudy.org/>



ACMS

Australian
Child
Maltreatment
Study

What is corporal punishment?

Administration, by a parent or caregiver, of physical force to a child, with the intention to cause pain but not injury, for the purpose of correction or behavioural control.



Aims

- Identify the prevalence of corporal punishment in youth 16-24 years & gender differences
- Examine perceptions of the necessity of corporal punishment by age group
- Examine associations between experiencing CP (>3 times) and mental health diagnoses (Major Depressive Disorder & Generalised Anxiety Disorder)

Measures

Corporal Punishment

Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire R2
(Australian Child Maltreatment Study) ²

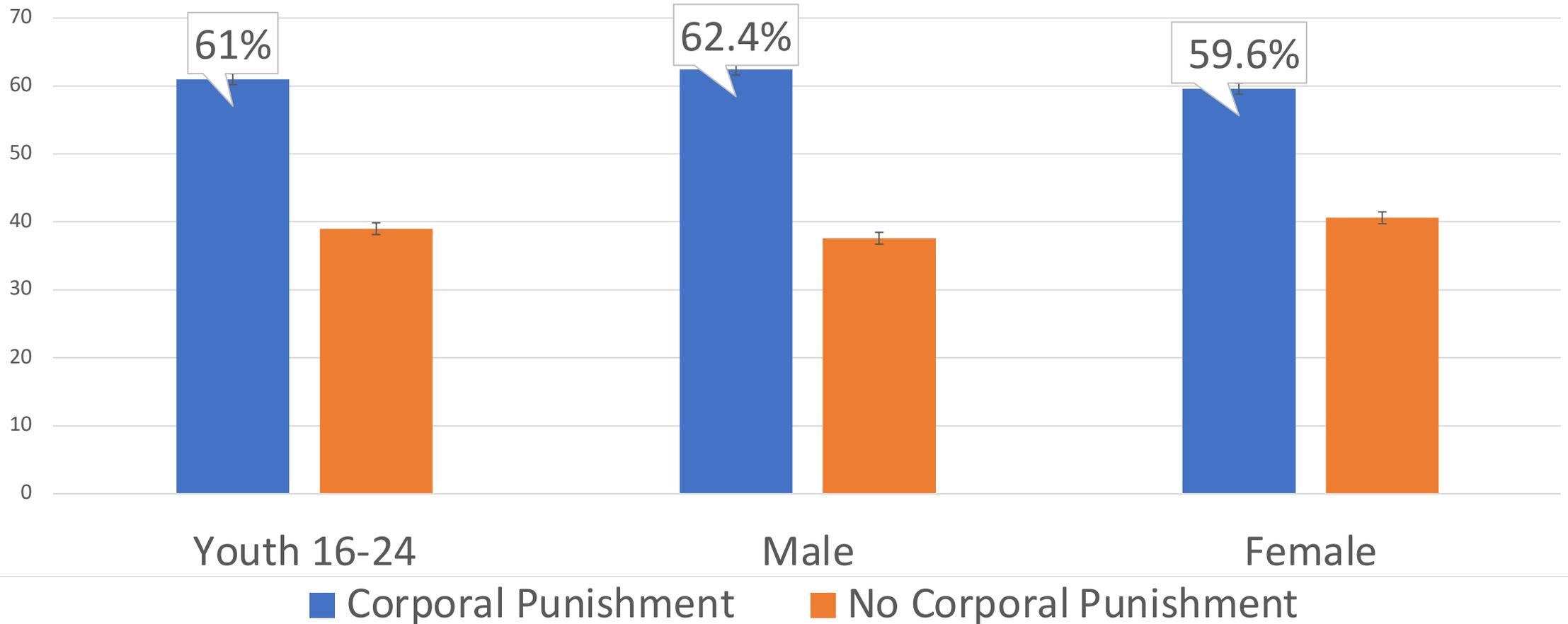
- Single Screener (Frequency cut off >3 times)
- Perceived necessity of corporal punishment in raising children

Mental health disorders

Mini International Neuropsychiatric Interview (M.I.N.I.)

- Major Depressive Disorder MDD (Lifetime)
- Generalized Anxiety Disorder GAD (current)

Lifetime prevalence of corporal punishment in youth sample



95% CI 59.2-62.9

CI 59.9-65

CI 56.9-62.3

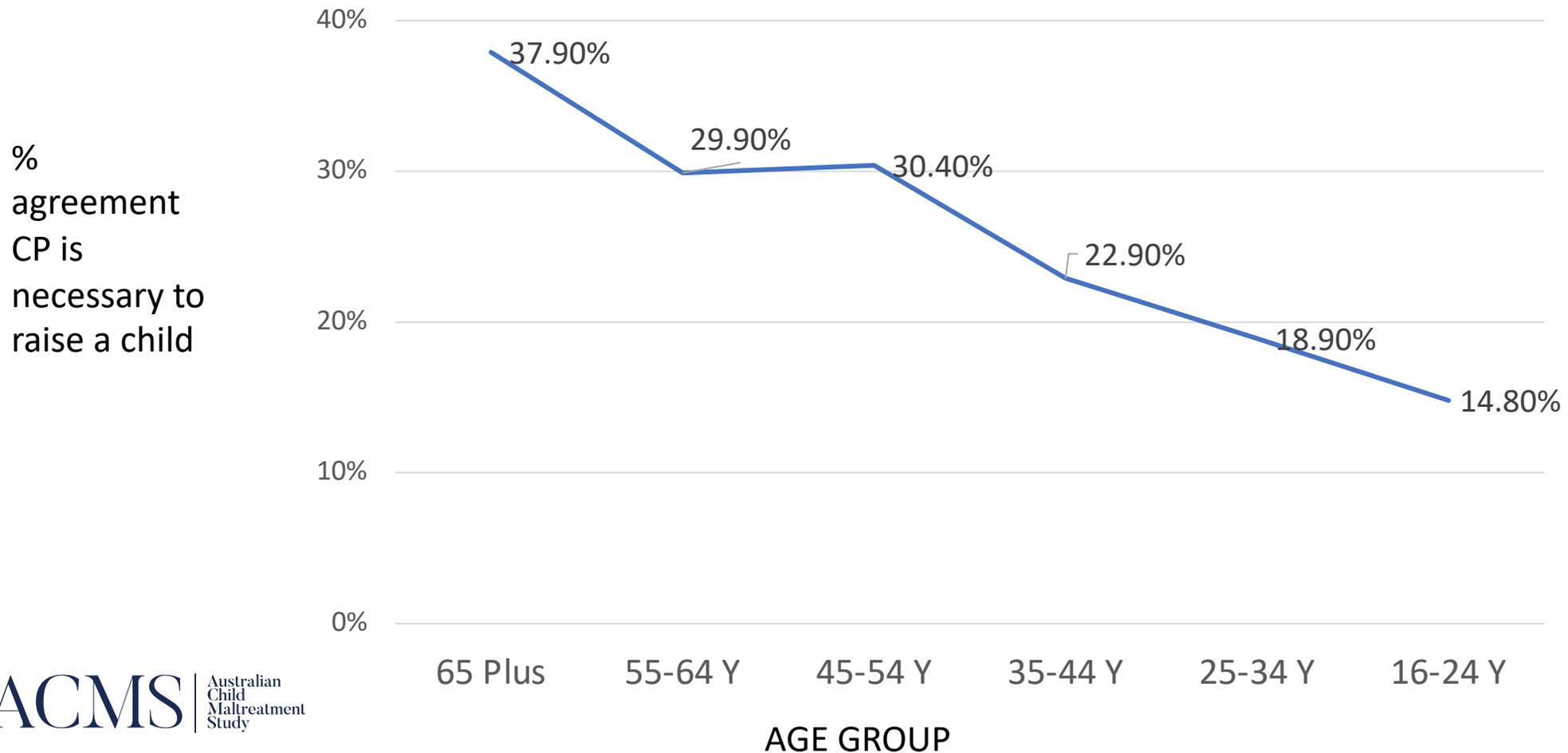
Associations between corporal punishment and MDD

Sample	Unadjusted ORs	Adjusted OR*	Significance adjusted model
Female	1.8 (1.4-2.3)	1.3 (1.0-1.8)	Borderline
Male	1.7 (1.3-2.4)	1.4 (1.0-1.9)	Borderline

Associations between corporal punishment and GAD

Sample	Unadjusted ORs	Adjusted OR*	Significance adjusted model
Female	2.1 (1.6-2.7)	1.6 (1.2-2.1)	↓
Male	1.6 (1.1-2.4)	1.1 (0.7-1.7)	Nonsignificant

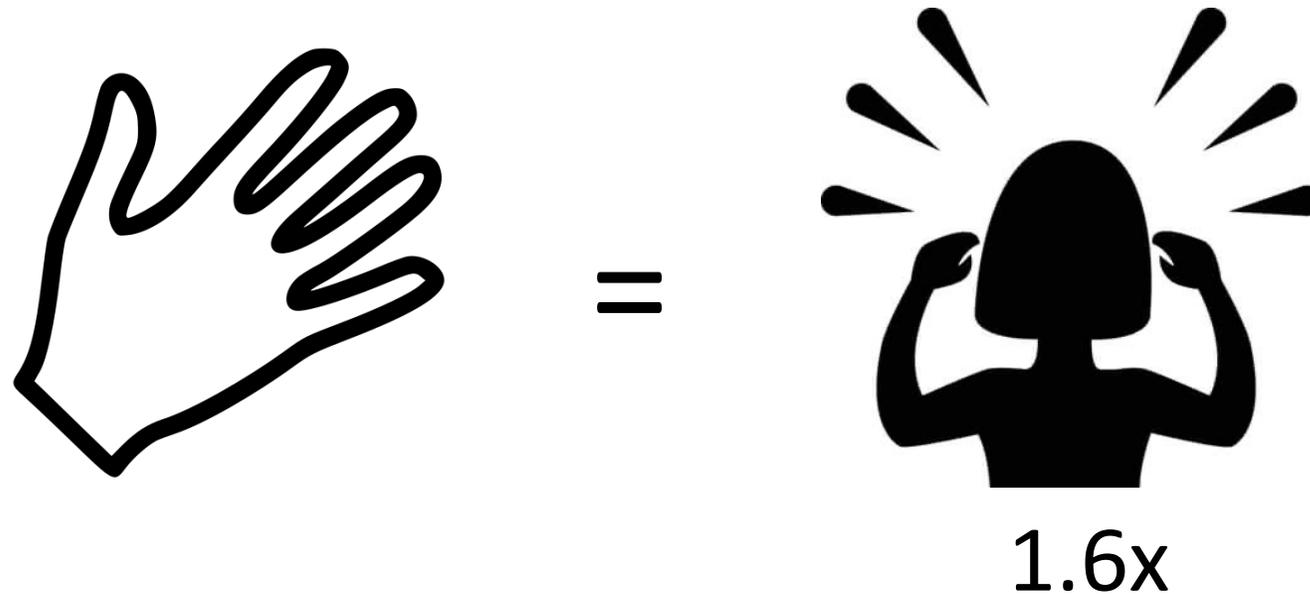
Perceptions about the need for corporal punishment are changing



Discussion

- Experience of corporal punishment in Australian youth is common (Around 61%).
- CP is only slightly more common in males than females
- CP associated with major depression & generalized anxiety disorder but driven by other maltreatment
- Belief in the need for corporal punishment is dramatically lower in younger people than older people indicating wide-spread attitudinal change

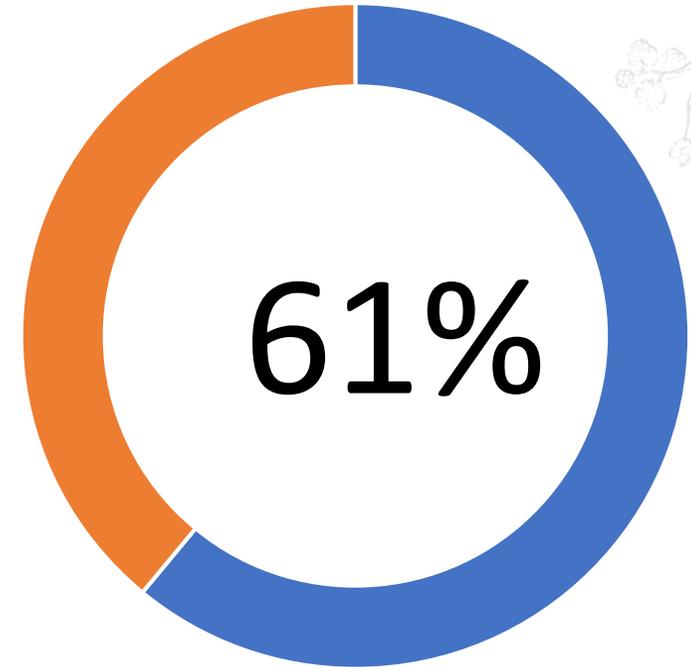
Girls who experience corporal punishment are more likely to report clinical anxiety



AFTER adjusting for other child abuse and neglect

Take home messages

- Corporal punishment places kids at greater odds of mental health diagnoses
- Children deserve violence free childhoods
- Beliefs about the need for CP are changing and this may be in opportunity for law reform



of youth (16-24y) experience
corporal punishment
(>3 times)