

## **Problem coping skills, psychosocial adversities and mental health problems in children and adolescents as predictors of criminal outcomes in young adulthood.**

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## **Problem coping skills, psychosocial adversities and mental health problems in children and adolescents as predictors of criminal outcomes in young adulthood.**

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### **Source**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to test child and adolescent psychosocial and psychopathological risk factors as predictors of adult criminal outcomes in a Swiss community sample. In particular, the role of active and avoidant problem coping in youths was analysed. Prevalence rates of young adult crime convictions based on register data were calculated. Univariate and multivariate logistic regressions were used to analyse the prediction of adult criminal convictions 15 years after assessment in a large Swiss community sample of children and adolescents ( $n = 1,086$ ). Risk factors assessed in childhood and adolescence included socio-economic status (SES), migration background, perceived parental behaviour, familial and other social stressors, coping styles, externalizing and internalizing problems and drug abuse including problematic alcohol consumption. The rate of any young adult conviction was 10.1 %. Besides externalizing problems and problematic alcohol consumption, the presence of any criminal conviction in young adulthood was predicted by low SES and avoidant coping even after controlling for the effects of externalizing problems and problematic alcohol use. The other predictors were significant only when externalizing behaviours and problematic alcohol use were not controlled. In addition to child and adolescent externalizing behaviour problems and substance use, low SES and inadequate problem-solving skills, in terms of avoidant coping, are major risk factors of young adult criminal outcomes and need to be considered in forensic research and criminal prevention programs.

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