
Children's Week Forum



2010: Building brighter futures

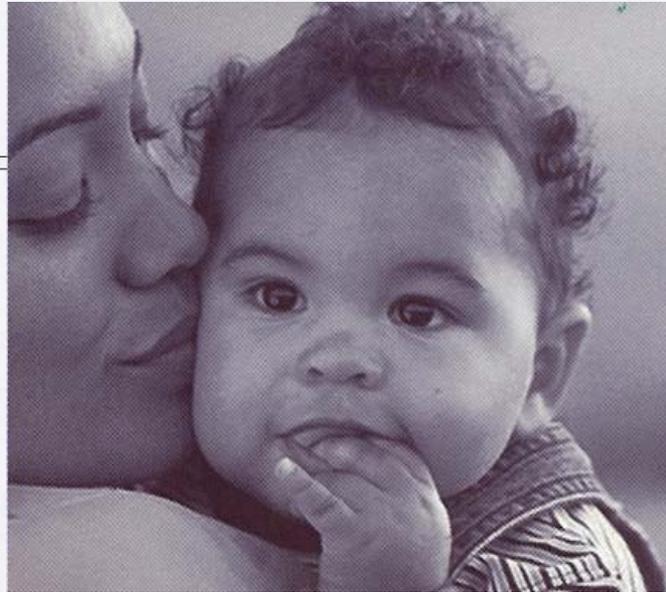
Dr Caroline Goossens
Infant, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist

Commissioner's research into Children's wellbeing:

8 things to live a full life

- Family: “a loving caring family is what everyone needs”
- Safety: especially in family
- Education
- The basics: food, housing, money
- Concerns: “One problem at a time you could fix..but with five you can't think where to begin”

What we know



“We are hard-wired for relationship”

Attachment- Bowlby 1980

- Intimate attachments to other human beings are hub around which a persons life revolves, not only as an infant or toddler or schoolchild but throughout adolescence and on into old age
- From these intimate attachments a person draws strength and enjoyment of life..
- These are matters about which current science and traditional wisdom are one

Human development

- **We are all relational beings, and our brain develops optimally only within the context of a “good enough” relationship.**
- **In particular, the Right orbitofrontal cortex is dependent on positive experiences in relationship for its growth.**

Early relationships have permanent effects on brain development, health and later mental health.



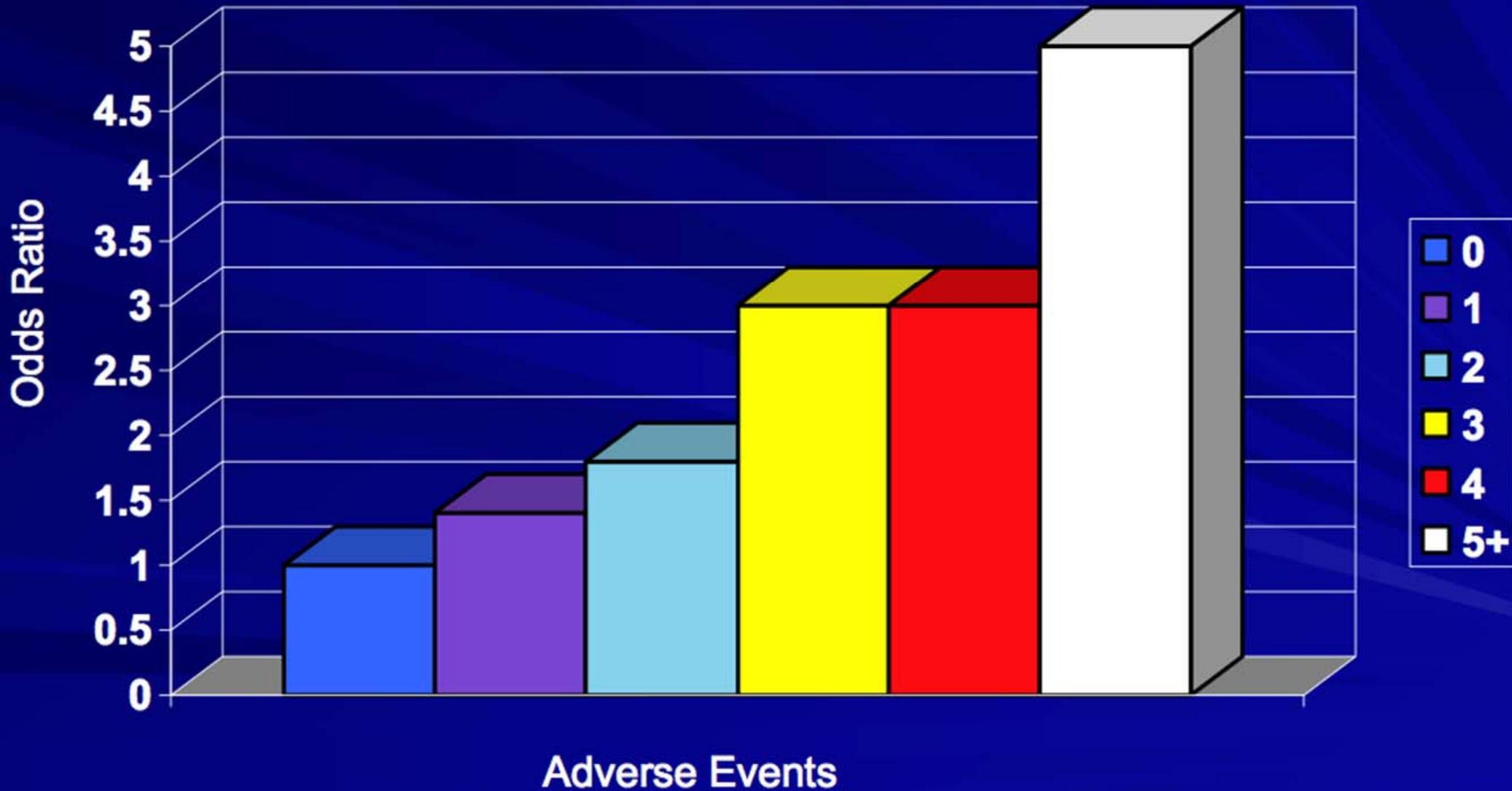
INFANT BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

- * Experience-dependent
- * 41 Billion neural pathways per hour
- * 11 Million per second
- * Establishing Patterns that appear to last throughout our lives, unless altered
- * New neural pathways can be formed

Impact of early experience

- n Early experience determine whether developing brain architecture provides a strong or weak architecture for all future learning, behaviour and health
- n If children raised in impoverished, neglectful or abusive environment OR if parents have serious mental health issues:
- n Children have substantially increased risk of developing serious emotional and behavioural problems, social and cognitive problems, learning and educational capabilities, and future major physical health problems

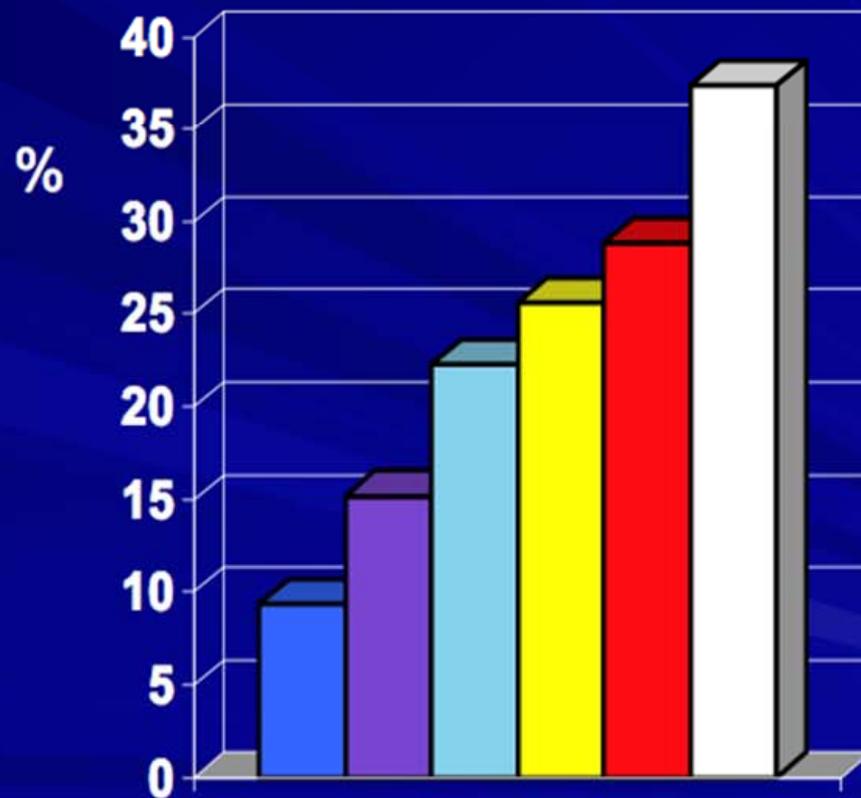
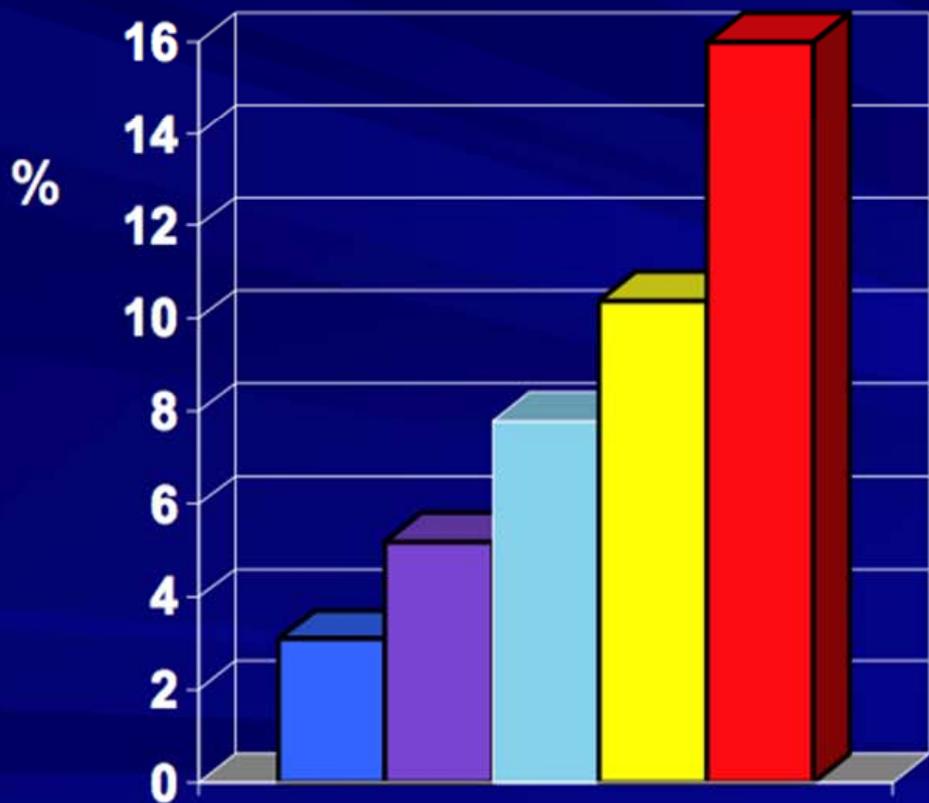
Adverse Childhood Events and Adult Depression



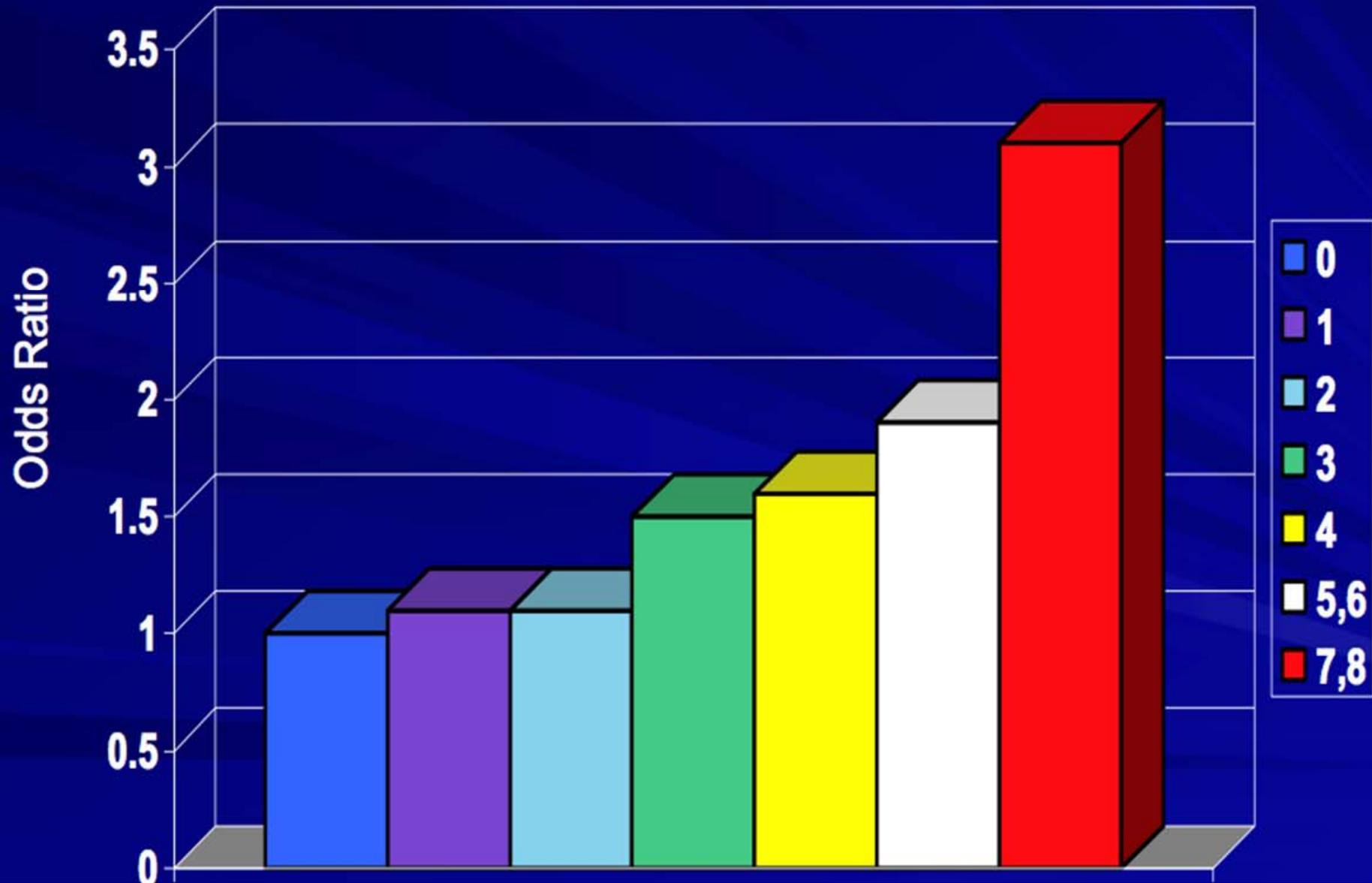
Adverse Childhood Events and Adult Substance Abuse

0 1 2 3 4+

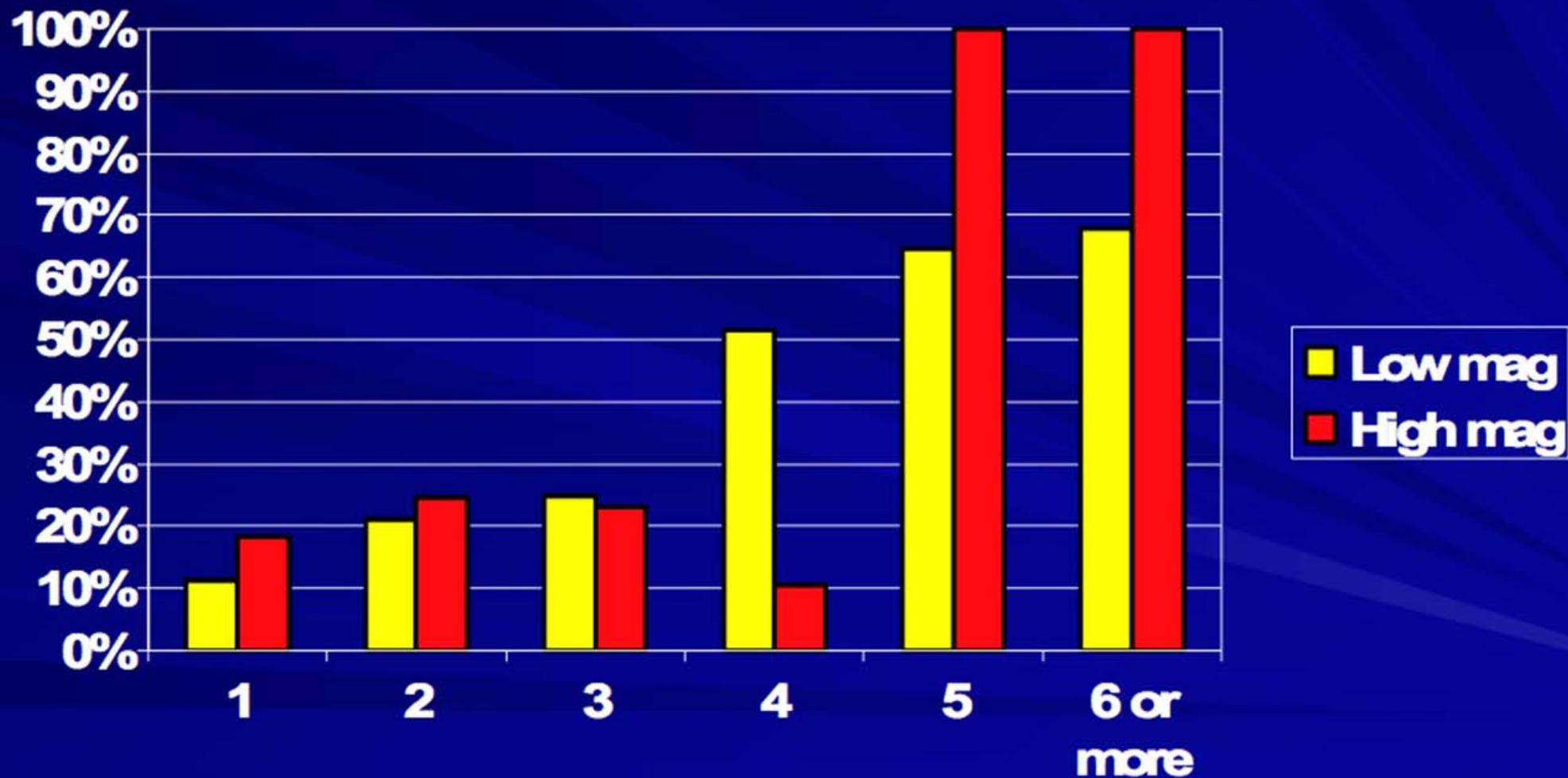
0 1 2 3 4 5+



Adverse Childhood Events and Adult Ischemic Heart Disease



Cumulative stressors and psychiatric disorders



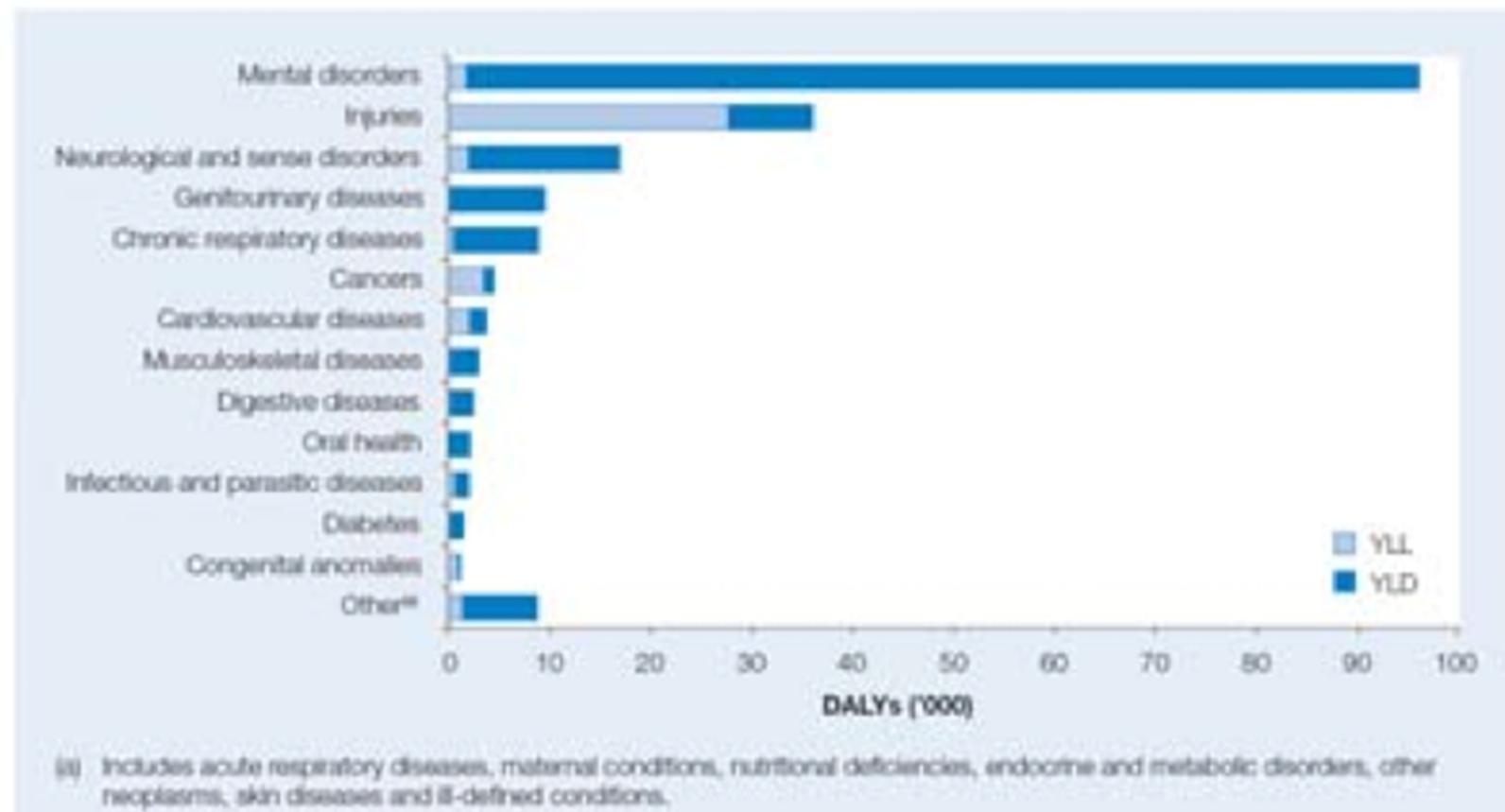
Development of the person

- From all the measurements taken during the first 6 yrs of life, the strongest predictor of psychopathology in adolescence (17.5) was disorganised attachment, measured at 12 and 18 months of age
- (Sroufe, Egeland, Carlson & Collins)



Mental health

Total burden of disease and injury (YLL, YLD and total DALYs) of major disease groups for 15–24 year olds, 2003 (AIHW 2007)



Raine study: W.A data

11.5% of 2 yr olds have externalising or internalizing behavioural problems, increasing to 20% by age 5.

> 6% have clinically significant mental health problems at age 2 & 5

Risk factors: young maternal age, antenatal smoking, multiple stress events; low family income; non Caucasian background.

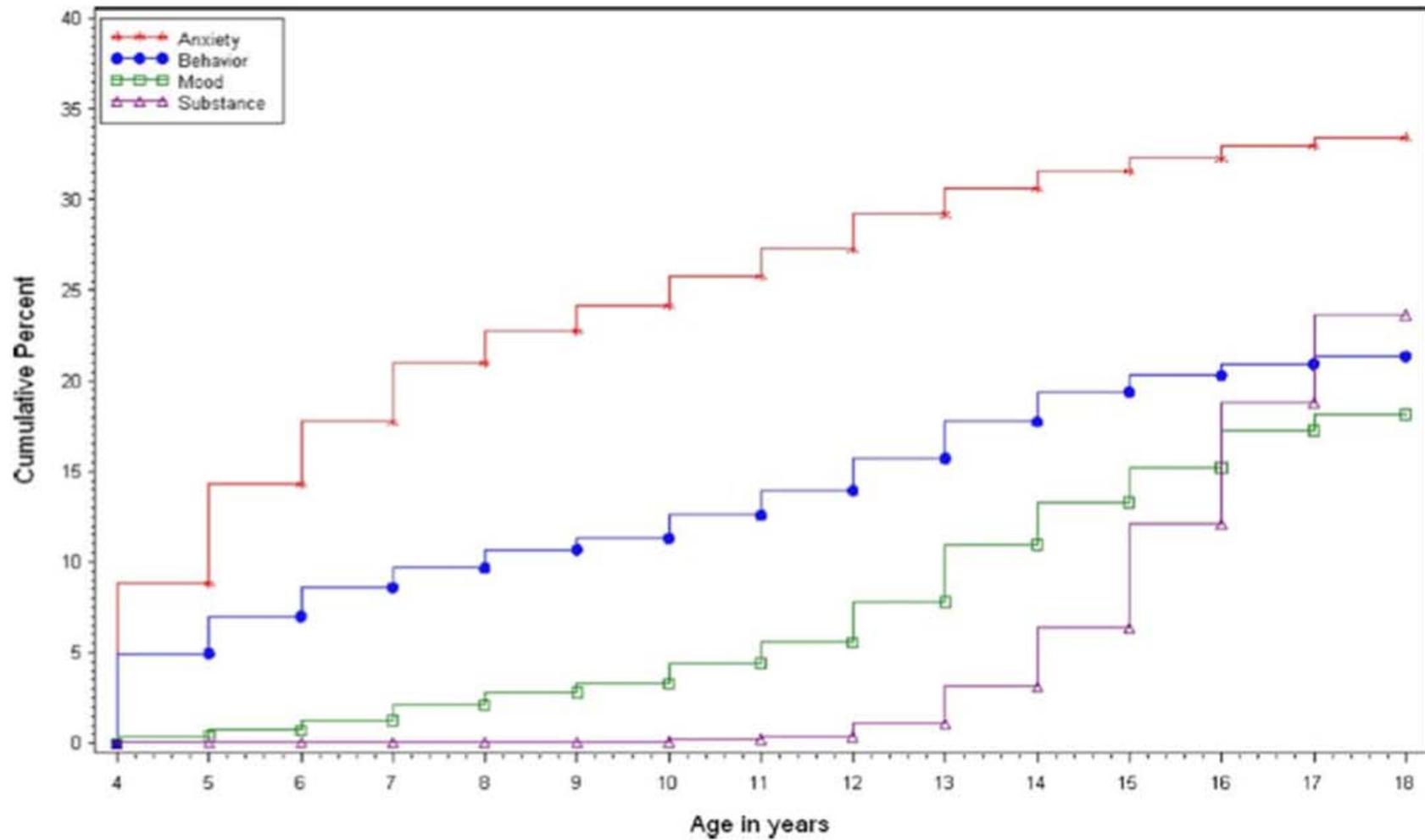
The Case for Early Intervention

- Events that occur during infancy, especially the experience of the social environment, are indelibly imprinted into the brain structures that are maturing in the first years of life.
- The child's first relationship, the one with their caregiver, acts as a template as it permanently moulds the individual's capacity to enter into all later emotional relationships (Schore, 1994)

Benefits of Early Intervention

- n Research demonstrates first symptoms of behavioural problems typically precede mental health disorder by 2-4 years
- n Left untreated emotional and behavioural difficulties persist and become more serious disorders over time
- n Early therapeutic interventions can be highly effective and are more cost effective than waiting to treat more serious disorders at a later age when they are more resistant to change
- n Parents tend to delay presenting children for assessment

FIGURE 1 Cumulative lifetime prevalence of major classes of *DSM-IV* disorders among adolescents (N = 10,123).



Intervention points

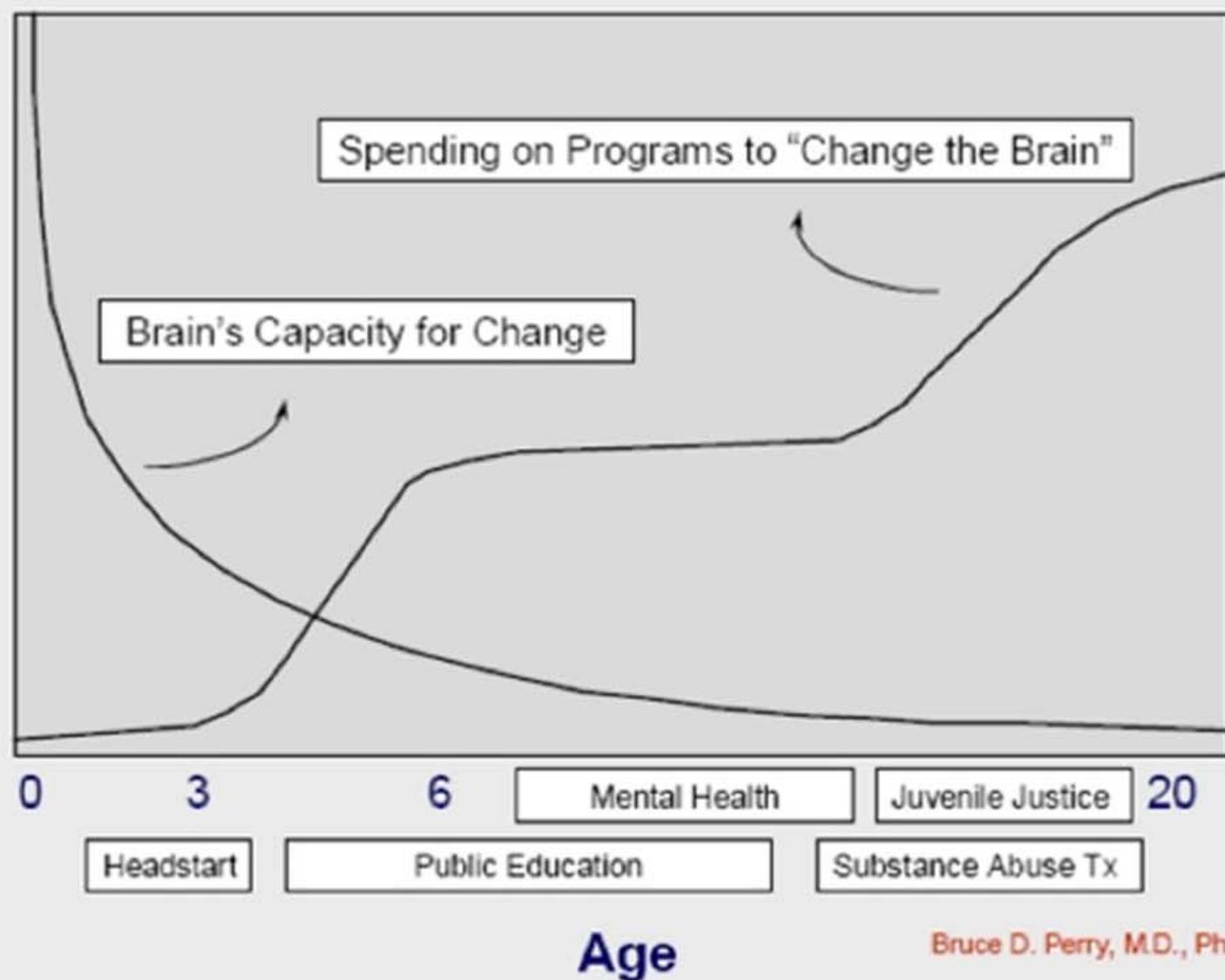
Perinatal & Infant

Preschool: aged 2-5 yrs

School aged 5-12

Adolescence 13-18

The Mismatch Between Opportunity and Investment



Consequences of untreated mental illness in childhood

- Burden of suffering with reduced self worth
- lost opportunities: educational and occupational
- reduced social & economic outcomes in adulthood
- associated with increased family conflict, family breakdown and homelessness

Resourcing

ICAYMHS resourced to see 1.5% population

Ought to be seeing 4%

Interventions focussed on late stage severe disorder which is complex and difficult to treat

UK benchmarking 20 FTE ICAYMHS clinicians per 100,000 of population: WA 7/ 100,000 of population