

Breakout sessions: Socioemotional skills 1

Bronte

11:30-12:50

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Trends in the socio-emotional skills of 10- and 11-year-olds in three study samples

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**CLOSER CONFERENCE
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Socio-Emotional Skills



- There has been increased focus on the importance of socio-emotional skills for children and adolescents.
- Evidence indicates that socio-emotional skills are related to better outcomes later in life (Goodman et al, 2015).
- Causal evidence indicates that these skills are malleable and can be enhanced in interventions (Gutman & Schoon, 2013).
- However, there is some concern that the socio-emotional skills of children and adolescents may be worsening. For 15- to 16-year-olds, depression nearly doubled from 1986 to 2006 in England and conduct problems more than doubled from 1974 to 1999 in UK (Collinshaw et al., 2010; 2014).
- Important to see whether these trends have continued for adolescents using nationally representative samples for a sufficiently long period.

Early Adolescence



Few studies have looked specifically at trends in social-emotional skills of early adolescents (ages 10 to 14).

- Developmental period in which biological, social and contextual changes occur.
- Developmental period when emotional, behavioural and social problems begin to rise considerably.
- In Great Britain, for example, mental health problems affect 10.2% of boys aged 5 - 10, rising to 12.6% of boys aged 11 – 15, and 5.1% of girls aged 5 - 10, rising to 10.3% of girls aged 11 – 15.

Research Questions

In this study, we are interested in whether the socio-emotional skills of early adolescents have improved or worsened. Using three study samples, the following question was addressed:

- What are the trends in both parent- and teacher-rated scores of good conduct, conscientiousness, emotional health and sociability in 10- and 11-year-olds from 1999 to 2012?

BCAMHS in 1999 and 2004

- Carried out by the Social Survey Division of the Office of National Statistics to assess the prevalence rates of mental health disorders in children and adolescents in Great Britain
- Cross-sectional samples of children aged 5 – 15 years (1999) and aged 5 – 16 years (2004)
- Weighting used to ensure nationally representative sample.
- In the present study, 10- and 11-year-olds with available parent-reported data: 1,904 children (957 = boys; 947 = girls) in 1999 and 1,348 children (706 = boys; 642 = girls) in 2004
- Teacher-reported data restricted to England and Wales: 1,433 children (boys = 711; girls = 722) in 1999 and 962 children (boys = 509; girls = 453) in 2004

MCS in 2012

- Longitudinal study of children born between September 2000 and January 2002
- Over-sampled in areas of high child poverty, minority ethnic populations and the three smaller countries of the UK
- Weighting used to ensure a nationally representative sample
- Five sweeps completed so far: 9 months, age 3, age 5, age 7, age 11
- Age 11 restricted to GB: 11,397 10/11 children with data from parents and 7,085 with data from teachers
- Additional weights applied to data so there were equal proportions of 10- and 11-year-olds

Socio-Emotional Skills



- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) (Goodman, 1997 and 2001).
- 20 items divided into four groups or subscales relating to:
 - Good Conduct (e.g. often has temper tantrums, generally obedient);
 - Conscientiousness (e.g. thinks things out before acting, sees tasks through to the end);
 - Emotional Health (e.g. many worries, often unhappy);
 - Sociable (e.g. generally liked by other children, has at least one good friend);
- Bandings were defined so that 80% of children scored 'normal', 10% 'borderline' and 10% in the 'severe'

Findings



	Teachers- Girls		Teachers-Boys		Parents-Girls		Parents-Boys	
	Mean	Severe	Mean	Severe	Mean	Severe	Mean	Severe
Good Conduct	+	+	+	+				
Conscientiousness	+	+	+	+	+ (1999-2004) - (2004-2012)		+	+
Emotional Health		+ (2004-2012)						
Sociable			+		+ (1999-2004)	- (2004-2012)		

Summary

- Teacher reports showed improving trends for early adolescents from 1999 to 2012, particularly for good conduct and conscientiousness.
- Parent reports identified only one area of sustained improvement between 1999 and 2012, namely conscientiousness among boys.
- Although parent reports of girls' conscientiousness and sociability indicated improving trends from 1999 to 2004, they suggested worsening trends from 2004.

Implications and Future Studies



- Perceptions of socio-emotional skills vary by the gender of the adolescent, the context in which they are observed and by whom they are reported.
- Why was there variation between parent and teacher ratings of early adolescents' social and emotional skills? Such lack of congruence may indicate different priorities for school and home-based interventions.
- The reasons why there were changes were not tested. Future studies may determine whether parental, educational, social and economic factors explain differences in socio-emotional skills for early adolescents during this period.

Thank you

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Lunch

CLOSER search platform demonstrations and poster session

12:50-14:00

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