

CONCEPT PAPER TEMPLATE

Provisional Paper Title:	The Association Between Positive Youth Development and Positive Parenting Environments
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Objective of the study:

To examine the extent to which indicators of positive youth development predict positive home and family environments of parents and their children.

Data analysis methods:

Generalised Estimating Equation (GEE)

The proposed research aims to build a model that clarifies pathways to positive parenting outcomes, such as a stimulating and supportive family environment (Linver, Brooks-Gunn, & Cabrera, 2004).

Outcomes:

HOME and positive parenting indicators from the parenting study (the parenting data will be derived from the same variables as used previously: see Belsky, Hancox, Sligo, and Poulton (2012)).

Exposures:

Indicators of positive youth development: including well-being and high school educational outcomes (spanning ages 15 to 18) (see Olsson et al., 2012).

Confounders:

Childhood SES (averaged birth to 15), Parent age at child's birth, sex of parent.

Variables needed at which ages:

Dunedin Study:

Sex

Childhood SES (birth to age 15)

Wellbeing (15-18) as previously used in Olsson et al., 2012. Variables are:

Social attachments age 15 (peers, parents, confidant, school)

Life satisfaction age 18 (SWLS, time, people and future)

Strengths (ages 15 & 18) – self report x/22 and parent report x/18

Social Participation- youth groups age 15 and 18, sports age 18

Academic Achievement (also from Olsson et al., 2012)

Reading (age 15)

Exams score (age 18)

3+ years of High school completed (age 18)

Doing well at school (age 18)

Parenting Study:

Age of parent when target child was born

HOME data

Positive parenting behaviour

Significance of the study (for theory, research methods or clinical practice):

The focus of much prevention science has been identifying risks (and risk modifiers) with

the aim of informing approaches to reducing the incidence of disease and disorder. There has been considerably less work done on understanding the foundations of positive development; yet investments here not only reduce risk they also promote optimal functioning and strengthen the fabric of society over time. There is an important need for new research documenting positive pathways, their predictors, and developmental consequences (within and across generations)

Previous research in the Dunedin Study cohort has identified a number of positive outcomes associated with adult well-being (Olsson, McGee, Nada-Raja, & Williams, 2012). Of interest was the finding that social connectedness was a greater contributor to adult well-being than academic achievement was. Other research in this sample has also indicated that characteristics such as high IQ (traditionally thought though as a protective factor) are not necessarily linked to better health outcomes, although there is an association between better mental health and better quality relationships (Schaefer et al., 2017). These findings indicate that both personal and interpersonal characteristics are important contributors to well-being, particularly when well-being is considered an important outcome in its own right (Huppert, 2009), rather than a predictor of e.g., economic success.

In research focused specifically on parenting, parenting history across childhood and early adolescence and was a weak predictor of observed parenting behavior, particularly in fathers (Belsky et al., 2012), indicating that further research is required to identify other factors that account for variance in parenting behaviour. Although factors such as SES and potentially parent's age (although c.f., Belsky et al., 2012) may contribute to parenting behaviour, research focused specifically on parenting (in a different sample) has indicated that parents' sense of efficacy may be a more important contributor to parenting stress (or lack thereof) than SES (Raikes & Thompson, 2005). Therefore, it is possible that some of the factors identified by Olsson et al. (2012) as being associated with well-being in adulthood may also be associated with a positive home environment and positive parenting.

The proposed research aims to develop a model of positive youth development capable of informing innovation in intervention aimed at promoting social-emotional health in young people, as teenagers, as young adults and as future parents (Triple Dividend). The specific focus of the work will be on preconception predictors of the quality of the home environment (including parenting) within which children live and grow across the first three years of life. The overarching aim is to identify strengths in one generation that lead to positive outcomes in future generations.

References:

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