

# CONCEPT PAPER TEMPLATE

<b>Provisional Paper Title:</b>	Wellbeing in adolescence and social support in parenthood
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## Objective of the study:

Social support is widely considered to be an important buffer against life stressors (e.g., Statistics New Zealand, 2015) and is potentially a predictor of better wellbeing (Siedlecki, Salthouse, Oishi, & Jeswani, 2014). The Dunedin Study has data on social support during parenthood, a crucial developmental phase, as well as measures of socioemotional wellbeing during adolescence (also increasingly recognised as a crucial developmental phase (Viner et al., 2015)).

The objective of the proposed research is to determine whether wellbeing in adolescence predicts better social support in parenthood and secondly to determine whether any observed association is driven mainly by the quality of adolescent parent and peer attachment or if all the components of adolescent wellbeing (life satisfaction, perceived strengths and extracurricular activities, as well as parent and peer attachment) contribute to social support in parenthood. A secondary objective is to run parallel analyses using data from the Australian Temperament Project (ATP), as this cohort has data on the broad constructs (wellbeing and social support during parenthood) being measured in the proposed research.

## Data analysis methods:

The primary analysis will use an overall measure of adolescent wellbeing (see Olsson, McGee, Nada-Raja, & Williams, 2012) and overall social support in parenthood (comprising support from parents, partner and best friend). Secondary analyses will explore whether adolescent wellbeing predicts social support (at the time of the parenting study) from parents, partner, and best friend differently. Lastly, we aim to determine whether the different aspects of wellbeing all contribute to later social support (parents, best friend, partner) or if any observed associations between wellbeing and social support were being driven solely by the parent and peer attachment measure at age 15. Linear regression will be used to analyse the data. Models will initially be adjusted for sex, age of study member parent, and relationship status at the time of parenting assessment. Fully adjusted models will include socioeconomic status from birth to age 15 and measures of family structure and climate.

## Variables needed at which ages:

### From DS:

Gender

Adolescent Wellbeing as per Olsson et al 2012:

Parent and Peer Attachment (age 15)

Life Satisfaction (age 15 & 18)

Strengths (ages 15 & 18 – both self and other identified)

Club/Sport participation (ages 15 & 18)

SES (birth to age 15)

Family climate in childhood

Early Childhood Egalitarianism & Authoritarianism

Middle Childhood Negative Discipline & Family Climate

Adolescent Family Climate

## Family Structure

Single parenting (G1)

Parental separation (G1)

## From Parenting Study:

Age of parent

Marital Status (G2: with other biological parent)

Social support measures (Social Support Scale and Partner Relations Scale)

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

Social support is seen as an important contributor to a variety of psychosocial outcomes (Barrera, 2000) and evidence suggests that the levels of social support that people experience do not change much between adolescence and young adulthood (unpublished data from ATP). If this is the case, then adolescence may be a critical period for the development of the life and interpersonal skills required to ensure good social support throughout the life course. However, social support needs and requirements change across the life course and vary as young people engage in milestone events and continue their development in adulthood (Mooney, Laursen, & Adams, 2007).

The Dunedin Study has a unique opportunity to examine how social support in parenthood is predicted by earlier socioemotional wellbeing. We know that during adolescence, parent and peer attachment are correlated at a low to moderate level (0.36 for the whole sample) and also that attachment in adolescence contributes to adolescent wellbeing (as conceptualized in a latent variable: see Olsson et al 2012). However research indicates that poorer wellbeing can both cause and result in lower social support and that social support is required and obtained from different members of one's social circle at different stages in the life course (Gariépy, Honkaniemi, & Quesnel-Vallée, 2016; Gracia & Herrero, 2004). This raises the question of whether overall wellbeing is important for the long-term maintenance of social support or whether it is simply that those who have good parent and peer attachments in adolescence go onto to have good social support in adulthood. It is also important to consider (given the low-moderate correlation between the parent and peer attachment) whether a broad base of positive attachment is important for later positive outcomes (ie good attachment to both parents and peers is required) or whether individual attachment relationships predict different social outcomes in adulthood (eg., good peer relations lead to good partner relations even if parent relationships remain poor across the life course). The two cohort approach that is proposed will give some insight into whether the findings are replicable (thus enabling us to speak to one of the major criticisms of work in psychology (Ioannidis, 2005)).

Exploring associations between better adolescent wellbeing and parent and peer attachment, and better social support during parenthood may lead to a better understanding of the trajectories of these associations and also of critical periods during development for acquiring the interpersonal skills that may lead better social support across the life course.

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