Research Programme 2013-2018

“The Impacts of Changed Living Conditions on Child and Adolescent Mental Health”

Funded by Forte: the Swedish Research Council for Health, Working Life and Welfare

Curt Hagquist, Principal Investigator

Presentation at CFBUPH:s 10th anniversary celebration conference

“Young people’s mental health – A global challenge”

Karlstad University 11 June 2019
Child and adolescent mental health - The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences

- Trends in mental health
- School, learning and mental health
- Prevention of poor mental health among school children

Conference 12-14 April, 2010
Conference 26-28 April, 2010
The Swedish Council on Technology Assessment in Health Care, SBU 19 May, 2010
Hearing 26 May, 2010
Information and implementation
• No information available about trends in mental health among children 0-10 years old.

• Increase between the mid-1980s and mid-2000s in the frequency of certain types of mental health problems, such as anxiety and mild depression. Bigger increase for girls than boys.

• The suicide rate over time among adolescents has not changed to any particular degree. It should be noted, however, that suicide rates have decreased drastically for all other age groups.
"...data and more profound analyses in order to explain the causes of the negative trends in young people’s mental health."
Theoretical framework based on Pearlin’s Stress Process Model

- Social characteristics:
  - Age
  - Gender
  - Country of birth
  - Immigrant status
  - Family structure
  - Socioeconomic background

- Stress exposure:
  - Income inequality
  - Academic achievement
  - Parental divorce
  - Immigrant status
  - Cyberbullying

- Social resources:
  - Social capital
  - School learning resources
  - Parental involvement
  - Peer relationships

- Personal resources:
  - Self-esteem
  - Self-efficacy
  - Coping
  - Learning strategies

- Mental health:
  - Internalizing problems
  - Externalizing problems

Societal changes over time:
- Living conditions
- Education
- Family structure
- Information and Communication Technology
Track A – Research Questions

Comparative analyses of societal changes and mental health trends within and between countries:

- Which changes and differences in societal conditions may explain adolescent mental health trends within and between countries?
- Which changes and differences in societal conditions may explain adolescent mental health trends within and between municipalities and schools in Sweden?
Track B – Research Questions

Multilevel analyses of how changes in early life living conditions affect mental health of children and young people, addressing the following research questions:

• Which are the causal effects of stress exposure in the school/family on mental health, and how are these effects affected by:
  – socio-demographic individual and family variables such as gender, age, country of birth, SES
  – personal resources and characteristics as cognition, self-esteem, self-efficacy,
  – social resources and characteristics as the school climate, the social capital, the neighbourhood,
  – the societal context at different points in time.

• Which changes and differences in societal conditions within and between municipalities and schools may explain variations in child and adolescent mental health in Sweden?
Additional purpose of the programme

The purpose of the Forte program grant was “…to reinforce and expand research environments in a long-term perspective”,

Therefore, efforts to increase the capacity and the competence of the research group have guided the program work since the very beginning.
International Scientific Advisory Board

- **David Andrich**, Chapple Professor, Graduate School of Education, The University of Western Australia, Perth, Australia.
- **Candace Currie**, Professor of Global Adolescent Health at Glasgow Caledonian University Public Health Department, London.
- **Magdalena Janus**, Professor and Ontario Chair in Early Child Development, Offord Centre, McMaster University, Canada.
- **Sir Michael Rutter**, Professor of Developmental Psychopathology, Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, UK.
- **Ulrike Ravens-Sieberer**, Professor, Research Division for Child Public Health, University Clinic Hamburg, Germany.
- **Doug Willms**, Professor, President of the Learning Bar Inc., Canada.
- **Steve Zubrick**, Professor, The University of Western Australia, Telethon Kids Institute, Perth, Australia.
Young in Värmland (YiV)

• Conducted eight times since 1988 and covers all grade 9 students (aged 15-16 years) in all schools in all 16 municipalities in the Värmland county.


• Each year, between 2400 and 3200 Year 9 students participated. In total, more than 23,000 grade 9 students. The participation rate has been high in all years, with the lowest being 84 percent.

• Data collected through a questionnaire handed out in the classroom and answered anonymously. Questions about psychosomatic symptoms, well-being, health-related behaviours, school and leisure time.

• Principal Investigator: Curt Hagquist, Centre for Research on Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Karlstad University.
• Conducted in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe and it currently includes 49 countries and regions across Europe and North America.

• Age groups: Students 11, 13 and 15 years old; grades 5, 7 and 9. Minimum of 1,500 students of each age group per country.


• Data collection in schools with a questionnaire completed anonymously in the classroom. Questions on psychosomatic symptoms and well-being, social environments, school and health-related behaviours.

• Swedish Principal Investigator: Petra Löfstedt, the Public Health Agency of Sweden.
Evaluation Through Follow-up (UGU)

• Cohort-sequential, longitudinal, design, including 10 nationally representative samples from age-cohorts born between 1948 and 2004, each with around 10,000 participants.

• Questionnaire and cognitive test data collected from students in grade 6 (age 13). Some cohorts also have information from parents and teachers. Questionnaires to students in grade 9 and 12.

• School administrative data collected yearly in grades 3 to 9: special needs education, relocations, subject choices, and grades.

• Register data from grade 3 throughout life: social background, educational choices, school achievement, degrees, occupations, and income. Additional register data (e.g., mental and physical health) available in specific research projects.

• Since 2018 UGU is a national research infrastructure with funding from the Swedish Research Council.

• Principal Investigator: Jan-Eric Gustafsson, Department of Education and Special Education, University of Gothenburg.
Thanks!
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