



Growing Up
in Ireland
National Longitudinal
Study of Children

Growing Up in Ireland

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11TH Annual Research Conference

21st November 2019

Book of Abstracts

Paper presentations

Keynote Address

Culture and the socio-economic status of families: Irish exceptionalism?

Keynote speaker

Professor Ross Macmillan
(University of Limerick)

Stratocaster A&B

The work of Gary Becker and the “new” economics of the family radically altered the ways in which social scientists understood family formation, family functioning, and family dissolution; emphasizing the role of economic rationality. One consequence of this economic turn in family research is the sidelining of the traditional focus on norms, values, and culture. However, what is rational from an economic perspective is not given – particularly in the context of a deep recession. In addition, economic shocks are never truly exogenous. Instead, the resulting experiences are mediated by the different tools and resources available to people by virtue of family background and biography. To adequately understand differences in outcomes, theory and methods need to be more attentive to context and contingencies.

This paper begins by discussing the “econocentric” turn in family studies and its implications for both theory and research. Central to the issue is the production of a wide and very influential literature on the socioeconomics of family life. We then highlight the idea of “familistic” culture that demographers have used to explain certain group differences in family forms. As both culture and economy are experienced and translated through background and biography, we further discuss

how the dynamics of socioeconomic standing and experience over the life course shape such things. Empirically, we combine and harmonize data from the *Growing Up in Ireland* Child cohort with comparable cohorts from the UK Millennium Cohort study to analyze the combined effects of socioeconomic status, economic change associated with the Great Recession, and variation in the strength of familistic culture on risk of family dissolution during the adolescent years.

Biographical note:

Professor Ross Macmillan is a sociologist and demographer who has authored almost fifty articles, chapters, books, and reviews and is among the most cited sociologists of his generation. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto, Queen’s University Canada, and the University of Winnipeg and he is currently the Chair in Sociology at the University of Limerick. He previously worked as a faculty member at Queen’s University Canada, University of Minnesota – Twin Cities and Bocconi University in Milan.

His research has focused on crime and victimization, child development and the life course, family relationships, and social epidemiology. His current research focuses on the empowerment/marginality of historically disadvantaged groups and impacts upon population health. He also aims to widely disseminate the results of research beyond academia: he lectures extensively internationally and has been a consultant or scientific advisor to organisations in Canada, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, South Korea, the UK, and the United States

Session A: Stratocaster A & B

Clusters of health behaviours among young adults in Ireland: Individual, family and school effects

Anne Nolan (ESRI, TCD)
Emer Smyth (ESRI, TCD)

Session A, Stratocaster A&B

Context: The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that about a third of the burden of disease in developed countries is directly attributable to four health behaviours: smoking, excessive consumption of alcohol, poor diet and low levels of physical activity. Previous research on health behaviours in adolescence has tended to focus on one or two of these health behaviours, with little regard to how major risk factors for disease cluster together.

Methods: Using data from waves 1-3 of the GUI '98 Cohort, this paper analyses how these four health behaviours cluster among the young adult population, and the relative importance of individual, family and school characteristics in determining these patterns. Latent class and cross-classified multilevel modelling techniques are used to analyse the data.

Results: Three distinct groups of young people were identified: 'unhealthy smokers and drinkers' (21 per cent of 17 year olds), 'unhealthy diet and physical activity' (36 per cent) and 'healthy' (43 per cent). Significant differences in group membership by gender, social background, non-cognitive skills and parental health behaviours were found. Young people's health behaviours were found to vary significantly by the second-level school and, to a lesser extent, the primary school attended. While measures of school policy had little substantive impact, school social mix and school climate emerged as more important influences on health behaviour.

Conclusions: The study findings show the interconnectedness of health behaviours, suggesting a multi-faceted approach is needed to address these issues, and the school environment emerges as a key arena for health promotion.

Does home warmth and ability to pay fuel bills affect child and parental health?

Gretta Mohan (ESRI)
Anne Nolan (ERSI)

Session A, Stratocaster A&B

Background: The physical environment in which a child grows up, plays a crucial role in their physical and mental health, as well as their overall wellbeing. The inability to heat or power one's home to an adequate degree, known as energy or fuel poverty, has been identified as an area of concern in Ireland. This issue has exercised policymakers, leading to the publication of a Strategy to Combat Energy Poverty, 2016-2019.

Method: We use two waves from both the infant and child cohorts of *Growing Up in Ireland* to investigate the association between home warmth and children's respiratory health, as well as parental depression. We also examine the link between ability to pay bills and health outcomes.

Results: Longitudinal regression analysis reveals a positive, statistically significant association between infant wheezing, respiratory disease and reporting that there was periods in which the family home had gone without heating in the previous 12 months due to a lack of money. While still evident, the strength of this association was not as strong in the child cohort. Going without heat for both the infant and child cohorts was positively associated with maternal and paternal depression.

Conclusions: In order to optimise family health and wellbeing, the findings of this study support a need for policy efforts to assist vulnerable households in meeting the cost of energy, as well as continued investment in energy efficient measures in the home.

Session B: Stratocaster C

Externalising behaviour, internalising problems and academic attainment: Developmental cascades in the *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) study

Elizabeth de Forge (UCD)
William Kinsella (UCD)
Jennifer Symonds (UCD)

Session B, Stratocaster C

Context: This research study explored cascading effects in the development of externalising and internalising behaviour problems and academic attainment from middle childhood through adolescence. The impact of gender, socio-economic status and special educational needs on the development of problems across these domains of functioning and the relationships between them were also investigated.

Method: The three published waves of the GUI child cohort were utilised to conduct a cross lagged panel analysis modelling developmental cascades linking externalising behaviour, internalising problems and academic attainment from middle childhood through adolescence. The influence of gender in these developmental processes was assessed using a multi group analysis. The impact of socio economic status and special educational needs on the cascade processes were also examined by their inclusion as covariates in the model.

Results: Results of the analysis indicated that lower academic attainment in middle childhood was associated with higher subsequent levels of externalising behaviour, as predicted by the academic incompetence hypothesis, and that externalising behaviour problems were negatively associated with later academic attainment, as predicted by the adjustment erosion hypothesis. Girls were at greater risk for the development of these negative cascades, as well as for links between externalising behaviour and later internalising difficulties, than were boys. Socio-economic status and special educational needs were associated with study variables, but did not impact the nature or strength of the cascade pathways identified.

Conclusions: The implications of study findings for prevention initiatives and supporting the holistic development of young people are outlined.

How does bullying impact the mathematical achievement of 9 year olds?

Daráine Murphy (UCD)
Flavia Santos (UCD)

Session B, Stratocaster C

Introduction: Bullying in schools is a pervasive problem that has profound implications for both the victim and the school environment. It has been found that between the ages of 8-13 are salient for such behaviours (Nansel et al, 2001; Pellegrini, & Bartini). Some researchers propose that students who have been bullied experience poorer academic performance because they feel unhappy in school and in turn begin to disengage. While others propose that the anxiety, depression and loneliness caused by the bullying can distract from concentration during the school day and impact on performance (Schwartz et al, 2005). Therefore, the relationship between mathematical achievement and bullying remains unclear (Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010). The aim of this study is to understand the relationship between bullying and mathematical achievement considering children's and parent's perception of emotional variables and maths performance.

Method: This study is based on data from 8,568 children and their parents from the child cohort from *Growing Up in Ireland*.

Results: Preliminary results revealed that children who reported they had experienced bullying scored significantly lower on the Drumcondra Maths Test. However, when parent's reported socio-emotional difficulties were added to the model, bullying was no longer significant but those who reported socio-emotional difficulties had significantly lower scores on the Drumcondra Maths test. Similar patterns were found when children's self-concept was added to the model.

Conclusion: These results add further clarity to the relationship between bullying and Mathematical Achievement. It suggests that bullying does not directly influence performance in maths, rather, it causes the student considerable distress which in turn influences performance. Furthermore, if children have more positive overall views of themselves bullying is less likely to have a negative impact.

Session C: Alhambra

Parental employment, work-family conflict and outcomes for young children in Ireland

Helen Russell (ESRI)
Fran McGinnity (ESRI)

Session C, Alhambra

Context: While there is a burgeoning literature on the issue of work-life conflict (McGinnity and Whelan, 2009), the effects of such conflict on children's well-being and parent-child relationships have received less attention. Regarding mothers' employment, some research in the US finds that parental employment is associated with lower social skills in children aged 2 years and 4 to 5 years (NICHD ECCRN 2001). However, research in the UK has found that maternal employment was associated with fewer child behavioural difficulties (McMunn et al., 2010). Previous research has also tended to focus on mothers' employment and child outcomes (Brooks Gunn et al., 2002), though the work-life conflict literature emphasises the importance of household work strategies (Scherer and Steiber, 2007).

Method: The study draws on the infant cohort of the longitudinal *Growing Up in Ireland* Study to address the following research questions using regression modelling: are household employment patterns and paid working time at 9 months and 3 years associated with child/family outcomes (child socio-emotional outcomes and the parent-child relationship) at age 3 and at age 5? Is this relationship mediated by the level of work-family conflict in the household, household income and maternal activities with children?

Result: Preliminary analyses suggest that parental employment is associated with child outcomes but that the direction of the relationship and the mechanisms at play differ depending on the aspect of child well-being. The findings have potential implications for working-time and leave policies for parents of young children, as well as for flexible work policies.

Family stability: The effects of the economic crisis on families

Carmel Hannan (University of Limerick)
Ross Macmillan (University of Limerick)

Session C, Alhambra

Context: The timing of the collection of the GUI data coincided with the onset of the economic recession in Ireland. Using data from the first 3 waves of the child cohort study, we examine susceptibility to economic shocks at the family - rather than individual- level and the implications of this for child success in terms of exam results.

Methods: A Latent Class approach was employed to construct family classes from multiple observed indicators e.g., employment status, occupational prestige, homeownership, income. These classes were estimated within and across time to show stability and change in positions within social structures.

Findings: The overall finding is one of remarkable stability in family structure, at least for late childhood in Ireland. The "shock" of macro-economic declines is highly variable and most severe for those families with both class and familial vulnerabilities. All families experienced declines in their income level and their position within the income distribution remain unchanged but the implication of such declines for poverty, welfare and home-ownership is highly variable.

Conclusions: Class position and family structure are strongly co-related but heterogeneity in families is greater when class position is low. Further work is on-going to assess the degree to which this family stability is specific to the Irish case.

Session D: Stratocaster A & B

Introduction to using the *Growing Up in Ireland* time-use diary data

Amanda Quail (ESRI)

Session D, Stratocaster A & B

This presentation aims to provide researchers with an introduction to using the *Growing Up in Ireland* time-use diary data.

A one-day, self-complete Time-Use diary was completed by the Study Children of the Child Cohort (Cohort '98) at wave 1 (9 years), wave 2 (13 years) and wave 4 (20 years). A combined Time-Use diary and Food Frequency Questionnaire was completed at wave 3 (17/18 years).

The younger Infant Cohort (Cohort '08) first completed a Time-Use diary at wave 5 (9 years).

The data for both cohorts are available as stand-alone files from ISSDA and the CSO. The data can be matched to the main survey data (AMF/RMF) by means of a common unique identifier. This presentation focusses on promoting their use by raising awareness of these data and giving an overview of how to use them.

It will include a description of the methods used in collecting the data, an overview of the data themselves, how they were prepared for dissemination and how they should be matched to the AMF/RMF. Some preliminary findings of children's time use across the waves will also be presented.

A 'woman's' work is never done! (by a man): Gender inequalities in children's housework time in the Irish context

Caoimhe O'Reilly (ESRI)

Mike Quayle (University of Limerick)

Session D, Stratocaster A & B

Context: This study examined gender inequalities in children's housework time in the Irish context to determine whether unequal domestic labour divisions seen in adulthood begin in childhood. Specifically, the study examined whether female children conducted more housework than male children, whether housework time increases with age, whether the gender gap in housework increases with age and whether children spend more time doing sex-specific chores according to gender.

Method: This was a secondary analysis using time use and questionnaire data collected by '*Growing up in Ireland*' and was a repeated measures design. Participants were a nationally representative weighted sample of children living in Ireland, including 3831 males and 4135 females. The independent variables were time (repeated measures; age nine versus age thirteen) and gender. The dependent variables included housework time measured by a daily time use diary and housework time across a range of housework tasks measured by questionnaire.

Results: Several noteworthy results were found which highlight that children's housework distributions in the Irish context are unequal. The strongest findings include: females do more overall housework than males, of those children who do some housework contributions increase with age and the gender gap increases with age, and children do 'gender typical' chores (i.e. girls do dishwashing, boys put out bins).

Conclusion: Consequences of these findings are discussed in relation to gender inequality. Policy attempting to rebalance gender equality in domestic labour distributions (and the labour market) needs to acknowledge that inequalities are beginning in childhood, and therefore to tailor policies appropriately.

Session D: Stratocaster A & B

Concurrent association of physical activity and sedentary behaviour on obesity risk among *Growing Up in Ireland's* cohort '98 at 17/18 years: A Latent Class Analysis

Eoin McNamara (ESRI)

Session D, Stratocaster A & B

By age 17/18 years, almost 30% of *Growing Up in Ireland's* Cohort '98 were overweight or obese. However, obesity remains a complex condition, influenced by a multitude of factors. Physical activity and sedentary behaviour are independently established as key predictors of overweight and obesity. This study aims to identify clusters of combined sedentary and physical activity behaviour with a view to predicting overweight and obesity in this GUI cohort.

Using data collected by way of a self-complete 24 hour time-use diary questionnaire, detailed daily activity profiles were gathered for study participants at 17/18 years (n = 3,853). Latent class analysis was used to identify heterogeneous subgroups defined according to activity, screen-time and other sedentary behaviours. Further analysis explored the association between these subgroups and the risk of overweight/obesity.

The behavioural profiles (in terms of activity and sedentary behaviour) identified here can potentially be used to inform interventions and strategies targeting adolescent overweight and obesity.

Session E: Stratocaster C

Moving to, and Growing Up in, Ireland: Immigrant children's experience of early life stress, supportive relationships, and long-term psychological wellbeing

Deirdre Donohue (Trinity College Dublin)

Lorraine Swords (Trinity College Dublin)

Session E, Stratocaster C

Background: Physical, psychological and social stressors associated with children's migration experiences can result in poorer mental health functioning as they enter adolescence. However, every migration experience is different, and resulting outcomes can depend on many factors, such as a child's age at the time of migration and the social support network available to him or her.

Method: The present study investigates differential mental health outcomes of children from the child cohort of *Growing Up in Ireland* who migrated to Ireland in early childhood (n=522) or in middle childhood (n=430). Results: Children who moved to Ireland in middle childhood experienced significantly more stressful life events by age nine years than native born peers or those who moved to Ireland as younger children. By age 13 years they also report poorer outcomes in relation to their self-concept and more symptoms of anxiety and depression. Variations in findings relating to the child's gender are discussed. The role of 'relatedness', or positive relationships with parents and peers, in the association between stressful experiences in early life and long-term psychological outcomes will also be explored.

Conclusions: Exploring the impact of immigration on children's mental health along with potential mediating or moderating factors could have a significant and real impact on the young lives of those affected by informing policy and supporting practice.

Session E: Stratocaster C

Mental health trajectories of children across the birthweight spectrum

Niamh Dooley (RCSI & TCD)

Mary Clarke (RCSI)

Mary Cannon (RCSI & TCD)

Session E, Stratocaster C

Background/Context: The odds of having a mental health problem in adulthood are linearly related to birthweight, with smallest newborns at greatest risk. The effect is small but robust, existing independently of socioeconomic factors and shared familial factors. We wish to understand how this risk develops throughout childhood. No study to date has assessed the mental health correlates of normative birthweight. Our main questions are: (i) Does birthweight linearly relate to the odds of mental illness in childhood? (ii) Does the strength of this association vary across childhood? (iii) Does low birthweight affect the odds of all types of problem (attention-deficits, conduct, etc.) equally?

Methods: Questions will be explored in the '98 cohort RMF. Specific items about diagnosed mental illnesses were used to capture mental health in a binary fashion. The SDQ (mother-report) total problems score and its 4 subscores were used as scales of mental health. Birthweight was recorded retrospectively from mother-report at child-age 9. Covariates included: gestational age at birth, sex and physical health of the child, mental health of parents and familial socioeconomics.

Results: Each KG drop in birthweight corresponds to an almost two-fold increase in the odds of a mental/behavioural issue by age 13 and an almost three-fold increase in the odds of ADHD at any point in adolescence.

Conclusions: Our results show the odds of significant mental health issues in adolescence, particularly attentional/hyperactivity issues increase linearly with decreasing birthweight.

Bullying and psychotic experiences: Analysis of type, timing and gender in a representative Irish cohort study

Niamh Dhondt (RCSI)

Colm Healy (RCSI)

Mary Cannon (RCSI & Beaumont Hospital)

Session E, Stratocaster C

Background: Psychotic experiences are common in childhood and adolescent populations and their aetiology has been linked with bullying. Bullying comes in many forms, thus we aim to investigate the relationship, different types, timing and reasons of bullying with psychotic experiences.

Methods: We used data from the age 9 (n=8658) and 13 (n=7423) waves of the child cohort of the *Growing Up in Ireland* study. We used logistic regression to investigate relationships between types of bullying and reasons for bullying at ages 9 and 13 and psychotic experiences at 13, and secondary analysis stratified by gender was conducted.

Results: Psychotic experiences were reported by 13.1% of participants. They were significantly associated with bullying experience at ages 9 and 13. Effects were stronger for more recent bullying and persistent bullying. Exclusion emerged as the most strongly related type of child-reported bullying at age 13 for psychotic experiences in general (OR, 2.00; 95% CI, 1.34-2.99), delusional experiences (OR, 1.72; 95% CI, 1.13-2.62) and hallucinatory experiences (OR, 2.08; 95% CI, 1.24-3.49). Significant relationships were retained for boys, while physical bullying and sexual comments were significantly associated with psychotic experiences for girls.

Conclusions: These findings confirm and expand our understanding of the relationship between bullying and adolescent psychotic experiences. This relationship is different for girls and boys, and interventions to reduce bullying consider the differential effects different types of bullying have on boys and girls.

Session F: Alhambra

School social mix and junior cycle performance: Are there cumulative effects?

Emer Smyth (ESRI)

Session F, Alhambra

Context: There has been a good deal of debate about whether the social composition of a school has effects on student outcomes, over and above the influence of individual social background. However, existing research has tended to focus on effects at primary or secondary school level rather than examining whether there is a cumulative effect of social composition across the school career.

Methods: This paper uses cross-classified multilevel modelling to unpack the effects of school social mix at primary and second-level on Junior Certificate exam grades, drawing on GUI data collected at 9, 13 and 17 years of age. At school level, the analyses distinguish between schools provided with additional support under the DEIS programme because of their disadvantaged profile, fee-paying schools and other non-DEIS schools to examine the cumulative effect of school social mix.

Results: A substantial performance gap is evident between those in DEIS and non-DEIS schools, even taking account of detailed information on family background, including social class, parental education, household income and family structure. A performance gap is evident, but not as substantial, for young people who attended a DEIS primary school and then moved to a non-DEIS second-level school. The analyses explore whether these patterns relate to attitudes to school, educational expectations and/or access to, and take-up of, higher level subjects.

Conclusions: The paper provides new insights into the dynamics of school social segregation and its impact on educational outcomes.

Good schools or good students? The importance of selectivity for school rankings

Olive Sweetman (Maynooth University)

Aedín Doris (Maynooth University)

Donal O'Neill (Maynooth University & IZA Bonn)

Session F, Alhambra

Context: When students non-randomly select into schools according to prior achievement or socioeconomic factors, it can be difficult for parents to identify good schools. In this paper, we provide estimates of the value added of Irish second-level schools based on the results of a state examination taken by all students at age 15 and examine the implications of this for school choice.

Methods: When measuring the performance of schools, we control for prior achievement, non-cognitive skills, family income, parental education and family structure of the students. We show that these characteristics are strongly correlated with academic achievement and vary substantially across schools

Results: Controlling for selection, we find that the ranking produced by the value-added approach differs substantially from that produced using raw examination scores. We find that although school type is important in determining raw rank, it is unimportant for value-added rank. We conclude the paper by examining the link between school quality and school choice. We show that schools that have high raw ranks are more likely to be oversubscribed, whereas this is not true of schools that have high value added. Our analysis shows that if parents chose the best value-added school from among the set of feasible schools, then this reallocation of students would increase academic achievement substantially.

Conclusions: The paper highlights the importance of controlling for student intake when measuring schooling quality. We find that the factors determining value added appear to be related to unobserved individual school practices, rather than systematic school policies. Future initiatives combining Whole School evaluations with value-added measures, such as those estimated in this paper, could provide important insights into effective management practices.

Session F: Alhambra

Exploring the mechanism underlying the effect of family income on students' educational expectations

Olga Poluektova (Jacobs University Bremen)

Session F, Alhambra

Context: Achievement gap between the rich and the poor hinders social mobility and contributes to the reproduction of inequality. Despite the general agreement that educational expectations of students play an important role in this gap, the research on the mechanism underlying the effects of economic disadvantage on educational expectations is rather scarce. Building on the literature on the antecedents of educational expectations and on childhood poverty effects, this study tests the mediating roles of four groups of factors (students' school mastery experiences, their engagement in schoolwork, their parents' expectations regarding their attainment and school environment) in the relationship between family income and students' educational expectations.

Method: The study uses the data from the second wave of *Growing Up in Ireland*. First, I tested the effects of family income on students' educational expectations and aforementioned hypothesized mediators. Next, the factors affected by family income were tested as mediators.

Results: The results indicated that family income had a significant positive effect on students' school experiences, their parents' expectations and school environment (the percentage of students having literacy or numeracy problems). Parents' expectations and performance on ability tests mediated family income on students' educational expectations, with ability scores being the strongest mediator. Students' engagement in schoolwork was not impacted by family income, which suggests that the expectations gap is unlikely the result of lower SES families not seeing value in education.

Conclusions: I place the findings in the context of Bandura's self-efficacy theory and discuss the consequences of using standardized ability tests in educational settings.

Session G: Stratocaster A&B

The impact of disability on children's socio-emotional outcomes: Results from the *Growing Up in Ireland* Study

Ann Swift (Trinity College Dublin)
Eduarne Garcia Iriarte (Trinity College Dublin)
Philip Curry (Trinity College Dublin)
Roy McConkey (The University of Ulster)
Robbie Gilligan (Trinity College Dublin)
Marisa Antunes (Trinity College Dublin)

Session G, Stratocaster A&B

Context: Previous research conducted on the *Growing Up in Ireland* study has identified that children with disabilities experience poorer socio-emotional health when compared to their non-disabled peers. However, there has been limited examination of the changes in socio-emotional outcomes over time and of the influence other socio-economic factors have in children with disabilities' socio-emotional health.

Method: This study aimed to explore socio-emotional outcomes for children with disabilities at ages 9 and 13 using data from the *Growing Up in Ireland* study. Secondary data analyses were conducted on a sample of 6,563 children.

Results: Significant differences in socio-emotional outcomes were found in children in relation to impairment status, household income and primary caregiver's level of education. No significant differences were found in relation to migration or gender status. Having an impairment and activity limitation significantly increased the likelihood of experiencing poorer socio-emotional outcomes over time. Our findings highlight a higher risk of socio-emotional problems among children with disabilities, especially among children from lower income backgrounds and with parents with lower educational attainment.

Conclusions: These findings clearly require policy development on two fronts. Firstly, there is a need to raise professional and community awareness on these issues. Secondly, there is a need to strengthen the capacity of health, education and social care systems to support schools, families, and communities in responding to needs as they emerge.

Positive youth development and victimization as a developmental system: A longitudinal Irish national cohort study

Giulio D'Urso (Kore University of Enna)
Jennifer Symonds (University College Dublin)
Ugo Pace (Kore University of Enna)

Session G, Stratocaster A&B

Context: Using Irish national cohort data, we investigated the developmental system of positive youth development, being bullied in adolescence, gender, and sociocultural context.

Method: Participants were 3,509 males (49%) and 3,656 females (51%) studied at ages nine, thirteen, and seventeen in the *Growing Up in Ireland* study.

Results: Using structural equation modelling we discovered that being bullied in early adolescence was predicted by fewer close friends, family poverty, and living in neighbourhoods with greater social disorder. After controlling for these factors, going to a low-income school did not impact being bullied. The developmental system also contained negative pathways from neighbourhood disorder and family poverty to connection and caring in early adolescence, and a positive pathway from being female to supportive teacher-student relationships. Furthermore, family trauma and transitions, and rapport with parents, predicted confidence, competence and character in late adolescence.

Conclusions: The results signal the importance of studying adolescent development using a systems perspective.

Session G: Stratocaster A&B

Youth support seeking from adults: The influence of additional non-parental support

Barbara Mirković (UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway)

Bernadine Brady (UCFRC, NUI Galway)

Charlotte Silke (UCFRC, NUI Galway)

Session G, Stratocaster A&B

Context: In facing challenges, young people often seek support from adults. Parents play a pivotal role in supporting and helping young people during adolescence, but other adults in their lives are also an important form of support. The goal of this paper is to reflect on youth support seeking from adults when facing problems, exploring differences between youth who seek support from parents only and those who seek support from parents and other non-parental adults.

Method: This paper outlines the findings of a secondary analysis of quantitative data from the third wave of *Growing up in Ireland* child cohort at 17/18 years. Data was collected from primary caregivers and young people reports. From 6126 young people in the national sample, 91,3% answered the selective question about the adult support they seek when facing difficulties.

Results: 36% of young people go for support to their parent only and 48% go to a parent and another adult. Comparing youth with these two different adult support profiles, there are significant differences found in the socioeconomic characteristics of the family, youths relationships with parents and peers, socioemotional behaviour, coping strategies, self-esteem and identity resolution. The data shows better outcomes for children with both parent and other adult support.

Conclusion: The findings show the value of additional support from non-parental adults in different areas of youths well-being. Further research is necessary to identify more about connections to supportive non-parental adults, which could be one of the key resources in youths transition to adulthood.

Young people's wellbeing in relation to sexual orientation: A cross-sectional analysis of *Growing Up in Ireland*

Nerilee Ceatha (SPHeRE, UCD)

Session G, Stratocaster A&B

Context: Recent research suggesting substantial vulnerabilities among sexual minority youth also highlights the importance of understanding factors that can promote wellbeing for this population. This study aims to identify such protective factors using data from *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI). It is aligned with the objectives of the National LGBTI+ Youth Strategy.

Methods: A cross-sectional analysis was conducted of GUI data gathered from Cohort '98, surveyed at 17-18 years. Data was aggregated of young people who described their sexual orientation as lesbian, gay, bisexual, questioning or asexual (LGBQA). Demographic and bivariate statistical analyses examined associations between sexual orientation and mental health.

Results: At 17-18 years of age (n=6029), one-in-ten young people self-identified as LGBQA, with LGB-identification (7%) consistent with global trends and gendered crossover effects. The inclusion of 'questioning' as a response is of interest, with 2.6% of young people describing themselves in this way. Almost three-quarters of LGBQA adolescents had not been diagnosed with depression or anxiety and importantly, of those who had (25%), the large majority received treatment (84%), either currently (56%) or in the past (43%).

Conclusions: For the first time, this study provides representative Irish data on sexual orientation. While generalisable, caution is advised in assuming the data is definitive. Findings will be discussed in the context of international patterns and developmental approaches. Future co-produced data analysis will seek to 'learn with' these seldom-heard young people by prioritising their involvement in the research process. This offers opportunities for enhanced understanding of the complex interplay of factors that promote wellbeing for LGBQA youth.

Session H: Stratocaster C

Trajectories of technology usage in younger children

Desmond O'Mahony (ESRI)

Session H, Stratocaster C

Context: Increased use of computers at home and school is current government policy in Ireland (Digital Strategy for Schools, 2017). Along with a continued growth of computer ownership and increasingly available broadband connections, Ireland has seen a greater number of children using computers and accessing the internet from a young age (Eurostat, 2005). This paper will conduct a longitudinal exploration of the link between young children's home screen time activities and academic performance in the areas of reading and mathematics.

Methods: Linked data from the Child Cohort of the *Growing Up in Ireland* Survey from 9 months to 9 years will be used for this study (ESRI, 2010). Latent Growth Curve (LGC) modelling will be used to explore longitudinal changes in screen time habits and the relationship this has with academic performance from infancy into mid childhood.

Results: Previous research using the 9 year old GUI cohort (Casey, Layte, Lyons, & Silles, 2012) revealed that engagement with computers through internet surfing for fun had a positive and significant relationship reading and mathematics performance at age 9: $\beta = 0.16$ $p < .05$, and $\beta = 0.05$ $p < .01$. Whereas use of instant messaging showed a negative relationship with reading $\beta = -0.16$, $p < .05$. The current study aims to extend this finding using LGC to account for inter wave attrition as well as non-linear changes over time in screen use and in academic performance (Musu-Gillette, Wigfield, Harring, & Eccles, 2015).

Conclusions: The findings of this research will add to the body of knowledge on how technology can be best used to promote beneficial academic outcomes.

The impact of screen use on the socio-emotional development of Irish 5-year-olds

Chloé Beatty (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick)

Suzanne M. Egan (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick)

Session H, Stratocaster C

Context: Although there has been a rise in young children's digital device use in most Irish homes, very little focus has been placed on the effects this screen use has on young children's socio-emotional development. The research aims to address this gap by assessing the extent of young Irish children's screen use and their engagement with various screen-based activities (e.g. playing video games or watching TV), and whether these types of engagements have differing impacts on their socio-emotional development.

Methods: Wave 3 of the *Growing Up in Ireland* Infant Cohort dataset was analysed to investigate the effects of screen time, and screen activities, on socio-emotional development in Irish 5-year-olds. Other factors known to affect development (e.g., maternal education attainment and employment status) were also controlled for, using regression models.

Results: The results indicated that screen use (both time and activity) had a small but significant impact on the children's socio-emotional scores, even after other environmental factors were controlled for. Longer amounts of screen time were associated with an increase in socio-emotional difficulties scores, but the results varied in severity based on the type of screen activity the child mostly engaged with (e.g., children who mostly played video games had the highest hyperactivity scores across all time brackets).

Conclusion: The implications of the findings may be of interest to Governmental bodies during policy making for young children's screen use, while also contributing to the discourse on what aspects of screen use may be detrimental or beneficial for young children's socio-emotional well-being.

Session H: Stratocaster C

Self-reported online screen time and self-reported sleep outcomes in 17 to 18 year old adolescents living in Ireland

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Session H, Stratocaster C

Context: International guidelines recommend 7 to 10 hours of sleep per night for developmental requirements and to optimize health in adolescents. There is growing concern that increased screen time usage is seen to contribute to insufficient sleeping patterns in adolescents. The aim of this cross-sectional study was to investigate the association between self-reported online screen time and self-reported sleep behaviours of 17 to 18 year old Irish adolescents.

Method: A secondary analysis of 6,216 adolescents from the national longitudinal study '*Growing Up in Ireland* Wave 3' dataset was undertaken. Screen time, sleep and general health variables were gathered via a self-reported questionnaire. Univariate and logistic regression analysis were conducted using SPSS software.

Results: Average sleep duration of respondents was 7.8 hours per night (SD \pm 1.14). Nine percent of Irish adolescents reported sleeping less than 7 hours per night, and 30% reported sleep difficulties. Thirty-two percent of respondents reported weekday online screen time usage of greater than 3 hours on weekdays and 49% on weekends. The findings confirmed an association between weekday online screen time and self-reported sleep difficulties in Irish adolescents (adjusted OR 1.30 [95% CI = 1.12-1.50]). An association between weekday online screen time and sleep duration of less than 7 hours per night was also identified (adjusted OR 1.80 [95% CI: 1.47 – 2.22]).

Conclusions: These findings have implications for researchers, public health practitioners and parents, as they may help guide and support national educational campaigns in relation to healthy screen time usage and improving sleep behaviours in adolescents.

Anti-social behaviour among Irish youth: Is early or late adolescence more 'risky'?

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Dorothy Watson (ESRI, *Growing Up in Ireland*)

Session H, Stratocaster C

Context: The continuing debate on youth delinquency reflects societal concerns about becoming a victim of crime, and the risk of injury to the individuals involved and the impact a criminal record will have on their future prospects.

Methods: This analysis uses two waves of the *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) Child Cohort data to look at trends in anti-social behaviour (ASB) at the beginning and end of adolescence. At 13 years, and again at age 17/18 years, youth self-reported their engagement in ASB using a list of 14 actions that varied in severity from 'not paid the correct fare on a bus or train' to 'deliberately set fire [to property]'.

Results: At age 13, nearly a quarter of boys and 10% of girls reported that they had intentionally hit, kicked or punched someone to hurt them at least once in the last year. Collectively, 39% of 13-year-olds had engaged in at least one ASB in the past year (46% boys and 31% girls).

By age 17/18 years, this figure had risen to 50% [albeit with an additional two categories of ASB listed at the later wave]. However, the 'not paying correct fare' item appeared to drive a lot of that increase: increasing from 14% to 33% over time. Aside from this, many of the self-reported rates for other actions were similar between 13 and 17/18 years.

Gender trends (boys more likely to report ASB) were evident at both time-points. Furthermore, individuals who had higher rates of ASB at 13 years were much more likely to be in the high 'offending' group again four years later.

Conclusions: While youth anti-social behaviour is relatively uncommon, especially the more serious offences, there is evidence that early engagement leads to continued involvement.

Session I: Alhambra

Neighbourhood safety and outdoor play in early childhood: evidence from the *Growing Up in Ireland* study

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Jennifer Pope (Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick)

Session I, Alhambra

Context: Research indicates that both the physical environment and the social capital of neighborhoods influence levels of outdoor play in childhood. The aim of the current research is to explore the neighbourhood factors that support, or act as barriers, to outdoor play in young Irish children (aged 5).

Methods: Data were drawn from Wave 3 of the Infant Cohort of the *Growing Up in Ireland* study. The primary caregiver was asked to indicate how often their child engages in various types of outdoor activities (e.g., climbing trees, playing chasing, riding a bike). They also provided information relating to various aspects of their neighbourhood such as traffic levels, neighbourhood safety, antisocial behaviour, local amenities and facilities.

Results: Hierarchical regression analyses indicated that levels of outdoor play were predicted by neighbourhood safety, particularly parent's perceived safety of their neighbourhood for children to play outside during the day. Neighbourhood safety continued to predict levels of outdoor play even after other factors were controlled for, such as the socio-economic status of the family. Additionally, factors relating to neighbourhood cohesion, neighbourhood facilities and anti-social behavior also predicted levels of outdoor play in young children.

Conclusions: The results are considered from an ecological systems perspective. An understanding of the neighbourhood factors that act as supports or barriers to outdoor play may have implications for parents, preschools, schools, and policy makers.

The effect of the home learning environment (HLE) on socioemotional development in early childhood

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Session I, Alhambra

Context: Research has demonstrated that the home learning environment (HLE) is important for early child development across domains. This current study examined if factors in the home learning environment had positive associations with socioemotional development in early childhood.

Methods: Data from 3 and 5 year olds in the infant cohort of the *Growing Up in Ireland* (GUI) study was used. The GUI study asked mothers what play and learning activities they engaged in with their children in the home. Socio emotional development was measured using the parent report Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) at age 3 and age 5.

Results: Findings indicate that at age 3 and at age 5 activities in the home learning environment were positively and significantly associated with various aspects of socioemotional development, such as hyperactivity, prosocial behaviour and self-control. The HLE made a small but significant contribution to predicting socio-emotional development scores, even after other factors were controlled in regression models. Maternal factors, such as warmth, positive quality of the mother child relationship, age and education also contributed to the regression models.

Conclusions: A rich home learning environment is important for later development, but parenting style and positive aspects of parent-child relationship are also critical for socioemotional development. Findings are discussed in the context of Bronfenbrenner's bioecological theory and may have implications for parents and policy makers.

Session I: Alhambra

Identifying children at risk of late emerging language difficulties during the preschool years

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Session I, Alhambra

Context: Children with late emerging language difficulties start off by demonstrating typical language growth but fall behind their peers later in development. This means that they are not identified through early language screening measures but start their formal school years with language weaknesses, putting them at an immediate disadvantage. This study aimed to determine the prevalence of late emerging language difficulties in children between 3 and 5 years and identify associated risk factors.

Method: In total, 8,266 participants from the *Growing up in Ireland* (GUI) study were included. Expressive vocabulary was measured at 3 and 5 years using the naming subtest of the British Abilities Scales. Fourteen risk factors were identified from the literature and the information relating to these was gathered through questionnaires with the child's primary caregiver. Multinomial logistic regression was used to determine which risk factors were associated with late emerging language difficulties.

Results: Overall, 5% of children presented with late emerging language difficulties. This profile was associated with five risk factors, learning English as additional language, low parent education levels, limited number of children's books in the home, low frequency of book reading and low frequency of home learning activities.

Conclusions: The study supports the need for early detection and intervention for children with late emerging language difficulties. Speech and Language Therapists should work collaboratively with other health and education professionals to monitor language abilities over time and provide targeted interventions guided by the identified risk factors.

Measuring childhood developmental outcomes in an Irish context: Building an index of standardised measures

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Session I, Alhambra

Context: This paper presents the results of a project to create a publicly available, searchable database of standardised measures that have been used across a range of research and evaluation studies in the child and youth sector in Ireland, including *Growing Up in Ireland* and Atlantic Philanthropies Prevention and Early Intervention Initiative.

Methods: Users can search this index of measures to find a standardised and validated tool which best suits their requirements for measuring and tracking developmental outcomes in an Irish context. The criteria for including a measure in the index are:

- (a) Must be a standardised and validated measure
- (b) Measure was used by an Irish/NI study between 2005-2020
- (c) Results are published in a publicly available report

Results: The index provides detailed information about each measure including, the domains measured, whether there is a charge to use it, and whether training is required to administer it. The index also links to the publications of Irish studies that have used the measure, and where available, links to sample research data in the public data archives.

Conclusions: The index is of particular value to practitioners as a resource for future service design and evaluation, and access to it will be provided through public and professional bodies. The index plays a part in making archived data 'reusable' by signposting it as an evidence base.



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