

Socioemotional Development and Health from Adolescence to Adulthood (Cambridge Studies on Child and Adolescent Health)

Editors: Lea Pulkkinen, Jaakko Kaprio and Richard J. Rose

(2006). New York: Cambridge University Press, 1st edition, 440 pp, US\$85.00, ISBN 0-521-84631-5.

A new issue in the series of Cambridge studies on child and adolescent health may interest all those researching developmental issues, whether from a genetic or more social point of view. The title, 'Socioemotional development and health from adolescence to adulthood', as well as the areas of expertise of the editors Pulkkinen, Kaprio and Rose reflect the broad scope of the book.

Within the first pages, the reader realizes that, although the topics are very broad, there is a very clear focus, namely on Finnish studies. Actually, to be precise, on three Finnish studies: the Jyväskylä Longitudinal Study of Personality and Social Development (JYLS) and two Finnish Twin studies (FinnTwin12 and FinnTwin16). This may lead to a surprising question: Why this focus on just three Finnish studies; can they really provide enough material for a whole book? Maybe not unexpected for those who are familiar with these studies, but the answer is yes. These three studies provide the general set-up needed to examine the transition from childhood into adulthood, and by itself can answer many questions. The JYLS started as the dissertation project of Pulkkinen with data collection on emotions and emotion regulation in 196 male and 173 female 8-year-olds. The sample size may be small but the longitudinal follow-up of deep phenotyping at the ages of 8, 14, 27, 36 and 42 years, coupled with a very high

response rate (94% had data at age 8 and one of the adult measurements and 67% participated in all measurements) make it indeed an exceptional study. The two FinnTwin studies each include about 2700 families with adolescent twins. The follow-up procedure differs somewhat for the 16-year-olds and the 12-year-olds but in both studies questionnaires are sent out at regular intervals. Again, response rates are very high, an astonishing feat in adolescents. The response rates and the very limited loss-at-follow-up leaves many of us researchers feeling somewhat jealous of not only the Finnish Population Register Centre but also of the Finnish attitude towards research.

The first general introduction to the studies and the methodology of twin studies is followed by three general topics. The first focuses on the association between health-related behavior in adolescence with later adult health. The individual topics present the variety in which these longitudinal data may be explored. Different designs are used to study tracking of body size into adulthood (are the same genes responsible for body size at different ages?), the association of early maturation with smoking and alcohol use, the initiation and continuation of substance use and way genetic factors may determine socioeconomic health disparities. The next part presents five studies of socioemotional behavior in adolescence, with a particular focus on the influence of parents and grandparents on

the development of emotional behavior. By various routes the studies show the effect of various parenting and, interestingly, also grandparenting styles on the emotional development of boys and girls. In the last section the focus is more on the interaction of personality with additional factors in adulthood, for example, unemployment, work career and their influence on well-being. An interesting chapter on optimism presents a different view from all other, more negatively directed studies.

The book is well written and presents a very nice overview of the different possibilities when using large-scale longitudinal studies, with many interesting angles only possible through additional twin family research. Some behavioral geneticists may come to realize there are more ways to look at their twin family data. There are times when readers with a specific interest in a personality or behavioral factor may want additional studies mentioned, and geneticists may want to be presented with more in depth information about research into the actual genes responsible, but all in all, the book presents a very nice read for anyone interested in the way environment and genetics interact to create a 'continuous lifelong process of person-environment interaction'.

Gonneke Willemsen

Department of Biological Psychology, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands