NONTRADITIONAL PATHS TOWARDS SUCCESSFUL LIFE OUTCOMES:
PILOT STUDY ON CORTISOL MEASUREMENT BY HAIR SAMPLING

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INTRODUCTION

This is a prospective, longitudinal multi-sample approach

Why add a hair cortisol measure?
- Important to incorporate biomarkers in stress measurement (Wright et al., 2015)
- Gives information on participants stress on a longer period of time
- New methodological approach
- New research for this lab
  - Important in the post-pandemic context (needs to be minimally controlled for)

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SAMPLES

This multi-sample longitudinal project includes :

1) Participants recruited in the late 1970s (ages between 50 and 60 y/o)

2) Children of the first sample (ages between 20 and 30 y/o)

3) Young adults recruited in high school between 2013-2015

Recruited to date (all from sample 1)
- 48 women et 16 men (N = 64)
- Age average = 55.13 (SD = 2.43)

METHODOLOGY
Procedure

- Ongoing data collection (started in February 2022)
- Self-reported online questionnaire which includes :

  - **Perceived Stress Scale** (Cohen et al., 1983; Lee, 2012)

  - Questions on **Negative experiences during the pandemic** regarding :
    - Financial impact
    - Fear of COVID-19
    - Health problems

  - **Beck Anxiety and Depression Inventories** (Beck et al., 1996; Beck & Steer, 1993)

  - Question on **Psychosocial adjustment** :
    - Diener's Life Satisfaction Scale (1985)
    - Satisfaction at work (Bérubé & al., 2016)
    - Satisfaction in family life (Zabriskie & Ward, 2013)
    - Civic engagement scale (Vézina & Poulin, 2019, 2020)

- Hair sample collected at home by themselves
  - **Hormonal measures** : extracted from hair samples in an external laboratory specialized in hormonal analyses
    - Cortisol
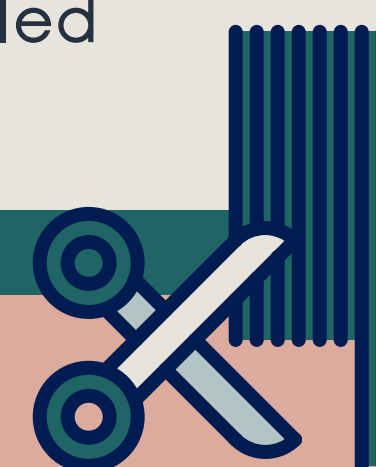
ANALYSIS

The objectives of the analysis are to examine associations between levels of cortisol and :
a) Subjective stress
b) Participant's negative experiences during the pandemic, their anxiety and depression symptoms
c) Measures of psychosocial adjustment
d) Participant's risk factors documented in past data collections

Upcoming analyses

CONCLUSION

Knowing that this population grew up in situations of socioeconomic vulnerability, this pilot study will hopefully:

- Help identify effective coping mechanisms to protect against stress effects on their mental health and social adjustment (Ferro & Gonzalez, 2020; Ursache et al., 2017)
- Give recommendations on services and programs to be offered to promote the resilience of vulnerable populations

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