

Mental health from adolescence through adulthood: Social determinants in the school context

Students who encounter difficulties in school often suffer from mental health issues. For example, many of these students are hyperactive, impulsive, aggressive, or they have problems related to alcohol or drugs. This research will help to understand why mental health problems and academic difficulties co-occur in adolescent students, by focusing on social factors that could explain or influence these associations. We hope that, in the long term, the knowledge acquired through this work will help to prevent mental health problems that can affect families over many generations. This research includes three specific objectives:

- (1) To identify mutual influences among social, academic, and mental health problems during adolescence.
- (2) To understand how youths' social experiences can buffer or exacerbate their academic difficulties and mental health issues.
- (3) To explain how youths' social life and school experiences can eventually have consequences on their own children's well being several years later.

Four samples followed during many years will be used to test for various hypotheses. We will verify whether experiences with peers affect students' values and attitudes toward school, and influence their psychological health from secondary school until adulthood. We will test whether positive social relationships with peers, parents, or teachers can buffer against the detrimental impact of problematic relationships in other spheres of adolescents' social life. We will seek to identify individual and social factors that can either perpetuate or break the transmission of academic failure and health issues from one generation to the next.

This study is innovative because past research has rarely measured mental health, social experiences, and school adjustment together to investigate how they influence each other over time, and how they can impact the well-being of future generations.