

May 6th

## Thematic session 1 Family and romantic relationships

### Adolescent's who value people... Is one relationship more important than many?

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This study focuses on humanistic adolescents, and their social relationships at other ages. According to past research, adolescents with humanistic values are more satisfied with life in middle adulthood than adolescents with hedonistic values. Furthermore, their adult life satisfaction is especially dependent on good partner relationships. In this study, I hypothesized that valuing people would signify an intrinsic interest in people rather than a need for social support. I also explored childhood correlates of humanistic values. Subjects were a Swedish longitudinal sample (N=212). The humanistic adolescents showed less jealous behaviors at age 12. At age 18, the humanistic adolescents valued their friends, independent of how often they met. This was different from the non-humanistic adolescents, who valued their friends more if they met more often. In the non-humanistic group, overall social support predicted subjective well-being when controlling for relationship quality. In the humanistic group, partner relationship quality at age 37 predicted subjective well-being when controlling for overall social support. Thus, for humanistic adolescents, quality rather than quantity of relationships is important for well-being.

### Effects of interparental conflicts and separation on adolescent romantic relationships

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Conflict between parents as well as parental separation has been shown to have negative effects on various aspects of adolescents' development including involvement in romantic relationships and the quality of such relationships. While modeling effects would seem highly likely, other findings point to the lack of emotional security, an important explanatory factor mediating between interparental discord and offspring outcomes. The present study investigates effects of interparental conflicts and parental separation on adolescents' and young adults' romantic relationships testing if insecurity in relation to parents functions as mediator.

Data come from 436 adolescents and young adults, age range 16 to 24 years from nuclear (41.0%), single mother (33.2%) and stepfather families (25.8%). Quality of romantic relationships was assessed by the Munich Individuation Test of Adolescence (scales: successful individuation, nurturance seeking, ambivalence, fear of love withdrawal, engulfment anxiety) as well as the Network of Relationships Inventory (scales: intimacy, conflict, reliability). Path analysis show effects of parental separation as well as conflicts on adolescents' romantic relationships. While effects of interparental conflict are indeed mediated by insecurities in the parent-offspring relationship, effects of divorce seem to be due to other factors. Findings are discussed in a family systems and attachment framework.

### Fidelity and infidelity in romantic relationships: secret little boxes of meanings

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This research takes as its object the psychological meanings of fidelity-infidelity and the explicit and implicit rules through which they are structured in the context of a romantic relationship. Fidelity is conceptualised as a constancy, a continuity in a certain direction... Fidelity might be seen in reference to the person itself (to ideas, feelings...) or to a relationship, where a pact is made. Which is this pact? Constructed by whom? Fidelity and mainly infidelity in romantic relationships have recently begun to appear as subjects of few psychological publications. The generality of the empirical research is based in the investigator's concept of fidelity and infidelity, lacking a differentiation between the concepts of fidelity and exclusivity – they are treated as if they were synonyms. The goal

of this study is to understand fidelity and infidelity by getting to know how people mean and conceive it. College undergraduate student's representations and meanings about fidelity and infidelity in romantic relationships are studied with an open-ended questionnaire. Since there is a generalized negative attitude toward infidelity (e.g., Sheppard, Nelson, & Andreoli-Mathie, 1995; Sprenkle & Weis, 1978), there is some susceptibility of responding in a self and other acceptable fashion. Therefore, a measure of defensiveness is also used. Data are analysed and related with demographic variables. Results are presented and discussed.

## Female pubertal timing and body related issues

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According to the literature, girls who enter puberty early have higher body mass index (BMI), tend to have more negative body images, and also complain more about their weights. Previous studies have attributed this to the rapid height and weight gain that girls experience during puberty. But, are these body related issues brought about by puberty or can they be explained by differences in body mass before puberty? Two Swedish longitudinal samples both going from preadolescence to midlife are used for the analyses. The results show that BMI have high temporal stability from childhood into midlife. Furthermore, the early-developed girls had higher BMI both in childhood and adulthood. They reported more weight problems and weight complaints, and perceived themselves more often as overweight at adult age. Age at puberty was related to later BMI, but when controlling for childhood BMI, the association between pubertal timing and early adulthood BMI became insignificant and the association between pubertal timing and midlife BMI weakened. It seems as puberty per se may not be the sole driving feature for individual differences in body perception, and that circumstances before puberty may have a stronger impact on concurrent and later female body related issues.

## Diary study using mobile phones? New methodological tools in studying daily lives of adolescents and their parents

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In this paper we discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the so-called daily diary approach in studying family life in adolescents. We introduce a diary program in which mobile phones are used as a means for data collection. In diary studies, people report on the events and experiences of their daily lives frequently, e.g. several times a day, to examine daily within-person and within-family variations in emotional experience. The focus is on the transmission of emotions between family members. In this paper we report findings from a one-week diary study of 29 Finnish families. The participants - mothers, fathers and one adolescent between the ages of 12 to 17 - reported the quality of their emotions and interactions three times a day. The majority of them answered the diary questions using mobile phones (short-text messages). The aim of this paper is to discuss the benefits and limitations of this kind of technology-assisted research: how did it work and what did we find out and learn?