

2021 INSA Conference

Collaboration: Working together
towards improved attendance.



INSA 

International Network
for School Attendance

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Welcome

We warmly welcome you to the 2021 INSA Conference. We are delighted you have joined us and we're proud to share this program which has such a rich variety of topics, presenters, and international perspectives.

Connecting with old and new colleagues is a special part of being at a conference. We hope you take the opportunities provided to make connections with others from around the world who share your passion for advancing school attendance.

We also hope you will take what you learn during the conference into your work, sharing it with colleagues and friends inside and outside your workplace. In this way, we share in the mission of securing positive futures for all young people.

Some of you will recall INSA's first conference in beautiful Oslo, Norway. This second conference is 'hosted' in marvellous Melbourne, Australia. In Australia, when we meet in person or online, it is customary to pay our respects to the Indigenous people of Australia.

We hereby acknowledge the Elders, and descendants of the Indigenous people of Australia who have been and are the Custodians of these lands. We acknowledge that the land on which we meet was the place of age-old ceremonies, of celebration, initiation, and renewal, and that the local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have had and continue to have a unique role in the life of these lands.

If you need assistance during the conference, please come to the 'Welcome Desk' sessions at the start of each day, or email the conference committee at: insaconference2021@insa.network
We look forward to seeing you all online!

The Conference Committee

Glenn Melvin
Deakin University, Australia

Lisa McKay Brown
University of Melbourne, Australia

Naoki Maeda
Kyushu University of Health and
Welfare, Japan

Irma De Wit
Association Secondary Education North
Kennemerland, The Netherlands

Lana Van Den Berghe
University of Ghent, Belgium



About INSA

The International Network for School Attendance (INSA) exists for all those who wish to promote school attendance and respond to school attendance problems. INSA aims to compile, generate, evaluate, and disseminate information, assessment, and intervention strategies.

Whether you're an academic who'd like to share research, a practitioner looking for successful interventions, or a policymaker keen to link up with colleagues in other countries, INSA is here for you.

The INSA Executive Committee

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Leiden University, The Netherlands

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Online conference etiquette



Please mute your microphone while listening to presentations



Say 'hi' in chat and ask questions. There will be time for questions at the end of the session



Please display your name



Remember all sessions are being recorded

Round Table Discussions

Please sign up for a Round Table Discussion. See page 4 & 6 for Round Table details.

[SIGN UP FOR OCTOBER 13TH](#)

[SIGN UP FOR OCTOBER 14TH](#)

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Day One: 13 October

Time	Event		
Melbourne (AEDT) 8.00am-8.55am Europe (CEST) 12 Oct 11.00pm-11.55pm USA (EDT) 12 Oct 5.00pm-5.55pm	Welcome Desk Lisa McKay-Brown & Glenn Melvin & Volunteers Bring queries and questions to the conference organisers.		CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 874 8023 8619 Password: 31172928
Melbourne (AEDT) 9.00am-9.15am Europe (CEST) 12.00am-12.15am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 6.00pm-6.15pm	Official Welcome from the Conference Committee Lisa McKay-Brown, Glenn Melvin, Irma de Wit, Lana Van Den Berghe & Naoki Maeda Conference opening address: Mr Todd Macbeth. Director Inclusive Education Professional Practice. Department of Education and Training, Victoria, Australia.		CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 895 9098 0430 Password: 47715777
Melbourne (AEDT) 9.15am-10.15am Europe (CEST) 12.15am-1.15am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 6.15pm-7.15pm	Keynote Address 1 Hedy Chang, Executive Director & Founder, Attendance Works, USA Addressing Chronic Absence: An essential strategy for educational equity in the United States. With hosts Lisa McKay-Brown & Glenn Melvin.		CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 895 9098 0430 Password: 47715777
Melbourne (AEDT) 10.15am-10.30am Europe (CEST) 1.15am-1.30am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 7.15pm-7.30pm	Short break		
Melbourne (AEDT) 10.30am-11.30am Europe (CEST) 1.30am-2.30am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 7.30pm-8.30pm	Parallel Session 1: Children at Risk Chair: Rebecca McGrath CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 966 7629 8992 Password: 0LLapaLk School attendance in children in out of home care Kitty Te Riele, Sharon Bessell, Tom Brunzell, Michael Guerzoni, Daryl Higgins, Joseph McDowall, Leanne McLean, Dale Murray, Anna Sullivan The presentation and impact of school refusal behaviour in children on the autism spectrum Raechel Smart, Dawn Adams, Kate Simpson Socio-emotional learning: Adding real-time outcomes data for behavior modification Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, Francis Bowen, Jangmin Kim, and Marlin Jackson	Parallel Session 2: Understanding & Responding to Attendance Problems Chair: Glenn Melvin CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 922 8362 5365 Password: Sbe55v5w Associations between developmental risk profiles, mental disorders, and student absences among primary and secondary students in Australia Kirstin Hancock Reducing chronic absenteeism in preschools in Chile: Evidence from a comparative study using 2011-2017 Ministry of Education data Mary Catherine Arbour, Carolina Soto, Yanira Alee, Sidney Atwood, Pablo Muñoz, Marcela Marzolo Can protective factors associated with resilience moderate the association between symptoms of depression and failure to complete upper secondary school? Kristin Gärtner-Askeland Assessing school attendance problems in Sweden and Finland -preliminary findings Johan Strömbeck	Invited Address Chair: Lisa McKay-Brown CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 836 2124 8240 Password: 924070 Mothers experiences supporting autistic children with school attendance difficulties Deborah Gray School can't not won't: the power of a lens change Louise Rogers, Melinda Carritt, Rebecca Gelsi, Tiffany Westphal
Melbourne (AEDT) 11.30am-11.40am Europe (CEST) 2.30am-2.40am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 8.30pm-8.40pm	Short break		
Melbourne (AEDT) 11.40am-12.30pm Europe (CEST) 2.40am-3.30am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 8.40pm-9.30pm	Round Table Discussions & 'Time to Chat' Sessions		Zoom links for Round Table Discussions will be emailed to delegates who have signed up.
Leading Attendance Together Matthew White			
Establishing a School Attendance Research Collaboration in Australia Lisa McKay Brown & Glenn Melvin			
It looks like school refusal...now what? Identifying and responding to early signs of school refusal in young students with autism Johanna Taylor			
Participating in international collaborations: How not to reinvent the wheel Marije Brouwer- Borghuis & Patricia Graczyk		CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 813 2884 0009 Password: 824861	
'Time to chat' - join with a small group of delegates in a Zoom break-out room to informally discuss a contemporary issue including: 1) Covid-19 & School Attendance 2) Parents & Parenting 3) School Attendance in Younger Children 4) Reaching Disengaged Students 5) School Exclusion 6) Autism & School Attendance			

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Time	Event		
Melbourne (AEDT) 12.30pm-1.15pm Europe (CEST) 3.30am-4.15am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 9.30pm- 10.15pm	Long break		
Melbourne (AEDT) 1.15pm-2.15pm Europe (CEST) 4.15am-5.15am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 10.15pm-11.15pm	Keynote Address 2 Megan Gilmour, CEO Missing School, Australia Don't wait until they're well: Policy and technology to keep sick kids connected to school.	CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 878 3120 0522 Password: 51708329	
Melbourne (AEDT) 2.15pm-2.25pm Europe (CEST) 5.15am-5.25am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 11.15pm-11.25pm	Short break		
Melbourne (AEDT) 2.25pm-3.25pm Europe (CEST) 5.25am-6.25am USA (EDT) 12 Oct 11.25pm-12.25am	Parallel Session 3: School Refusal Chair: Johanna Taylor CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 864 7189 3205 Password: 780503 On the way to a road map for school refusal interventions Marije Brouwer-Borghuis & David Heyne Responding to school refusal using a three-phase intervention model Sonja Van Buuren Adapting an online parenting program to support parents of school-refusing adolescents with clinical-level anxiety or depression: A qualitative study Anna Smout, Marie Yap, Glenn Melvin, Patrick Olivier Implementation of a CBT program in the management of anxious school refusal Hélène Denis	Parallel Session 4: Symposium – Examination of Spanish adolescents' profiles: school refusal behavior, perfectionism and affect Chair: Lisa McKay CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 829 9792 5653 Password: 521959 Functional profiles of school refusal behavior and school anxiety in Spanish adolescents Carolina González, Ricardo Sanmartín, María Vicent, José Manuel García-Fernández Studying the relationship between affective latent profiles and school refusal behaviour in Spanish youth population Ricardo Sanmartín, Carolina González, María Vicent, José Manuel García-Fernández 2 x 2 model of dispositional perfectionism and school refusal behavior María Vicent, Carolina González, Ricardo Sanmartín, José Manuel García-Fernández	Invited Address Chair: Glenn Melvin CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 878 9423 6557 Password: 25024714 Navigator – A school re-engagement program supporting young people holistically to identify their educational goals and plan a pathway to their aspirations Sandra Inserra & Kerry Williams

Conference Message Board

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Day Two: 14 October

Time	Event			
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	3:00pm-3.55pm 6:00am- 6.55am 12:00am-12.55am	Welcome Desk Bring queries and questions to the conference organisers.	CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 897 9751 7399 Password: 06734824	
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	4.00pm-4.15pm 7.00am-7.15am 1.00am-1.15am	Welcome and Reflections on Day 1 Irma de Wit, Lana Van Den Berghe, Lisa McKay-Brown, Glenn Melvin & Naoki Maeda	CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 850 9636 6346 Password: 32989451	
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	4.15pm-5.15pm 7.15am-8.15am 1.15am-2.15am	Keynote Address 3 Chris Varney, Founder & Chief Enabling Officer, ICAN Network, Australia Leveraging peer support programs to maintain school connection during COVID-19.	CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 850 9636 6346 Password: 32989451	
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	5.15pm-5.30pm 8.15am-8.30am 2.15am-2.30am	Short break		
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	5.30pm-6.15pm 8.30am-9.15am 2.30am-3.15am	Collaboration Activity Join with a small group of conference delegates to discuss the Conference Theme of Collaboration	CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 837 9226 6841 Password: 29103493	
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	6:15pm-7.15pm 9.15am-10.15am 3.15am-4.15am	Parallel Session 5: Child, Adolescent, Parent and School Perspectives Chair: David Heyne CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 858 4912 1423 Password: 72999684 Why do I come to school? - Adolescents' projects in a Change Laboratory as sources for improved school attendance Piiia Ruutu, Pauliina Rantavuori, Maria Tapola-Haapala, Yrjö Engeström Children's perspectives on problematic school absenteeism Line Raae Lund Missing the mark - How to see the child not just the diagnosis Eliza Fricker	Parallel Session 6: School Attendance in the time of Covid-19 Chair: Lana Van Den Berghe CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 992 1062 2324 Password: iaGDz29s Impact of the coronacrisis on youth, parents, and youth-professionals Thijs Tuenter The effects of covid-19 on high school students' school attendance in Finland Katarina Alanko, Åbo Akademi University, Finland & Johan Strömbeck, Åbo Akademi University, Linda Kuhlberg, Åbo Akademi University, Finland A qualitative exploration of school attendance problems in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK: parent and educational professionals' perspectives Brontë McDonald, Daniel Michelson, Kathryn J. Lester	Invited Address Chair: Irma de Wit CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 828 7401 8503 Password: 036061 Interprofessional collaboration – Missing voices on stage Hans Schuman
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	7.15pm-7.30pm 10.15am-10.30am 4.15am-4.30am	Short break		
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	7.30pm-8.30pm 10.30am-11.30am 4.30am-5.30am	Round Table Discussions & 'Time to Chat' Sessions		
		What does support to re-engage students who present with a complexity of needs and barriers, look like for schools and services around the globe and how can we learn from each-other? Sandra Inserra & Kerryn Williams	Zoom links for Round Table Discussions will be emailed to delegates who have signed up.	
		Successful vertical collaboration on national school attendance data Aggie Ohman & Malin Gren-Landell		
		Young researchers speak out: The collaborative exchange of inquiry Lana Van Den Berghe		
		'Time to chat' – join with a small group of delegates in a Zoom break-out room to informally discuss a contemporary issue including: 1) Covid-19 & School Attendance 2) Parents & Parenting 3) School Attendance in Younger Children 4) Reaching Disengaged Students 5) School Exclusion 6) Autism and School Attendance	CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 840 1526 1198 Password: 878520	

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Time		Event			
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	8.30pm-9.15pm 11.30am-12.15pm 5.30am- 6.15am	Long break			
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	9.15pm-10.15pm 12.15pm-1.15pm 6.15am-7.15am	Parallel Session 7: Collaboration Chair: Gil Keppens CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 6471893205 Password: 780503 Collaborating Across the Pond: Our road trip together to promote school attendance and address school attendance problems in Dutch schools Patricia Graczyk & Marije Brouwer-Borghuis How a single researcher can aid a municipality in evaluating a complex intervention to promote school attendance Kristin Gartner-Askeland Stakeholder perspectives on primary school pupils and sickness absence Esther Pijl, Maastricht University and GGD West-Brabant, The Netherlands, Yvonne Vanneste, GGD West-Brabant, The Netherlands, Frans Feron, Maastricht University, Jolanda Mathijssen, Tilburg University, Angélique de Rijk, Maastricht University	Parallel Session 8: Psychiatric Perspectives on School Attendance Chair: Martin Knollman CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 819 1724 4408 Password: 498163 Across the borders: Comparison of the prevalence and associated features of school absenteeism of Dutch and German outpatients using the SNACK Volker Reissner & Martin Knollman Supporting the schooling of children and adolescents in psychiatric care – perspective of students and parents Piia Ruutu School attendance problems in a clinical sample of Dutch and German children and adolescents with mental disorder Volker Reissner, Bas deVeen, Martin Knollman, Alexandra Wühl, Ingo Spitzcok von Brisinski, Freia Hahn, Wouter Staal, Johannes Hebebrand Construction and validation of the parent form of the Inventory of School Attendance Problems (ISAP) Martin Knollman & Volker Reissner	Parallel Session 9: Intervention and Support Chair: Irma de Wit CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 863 4005 3864 Password: 90312670 How to deal with sickness absence among primary school pupils? Adaptation of the MASS intervention Esther Pijl, Yvonne Vanneste, Jolanda Mathijssen, Frans Feron, Angélique de Rijk A practice-based approach toward school dropout: Support workers' perspectives on supporting students Lana Van Den Berghe, Sarah De Pauw, Stijn Vandeveldde Outcome of a multi-modal CBT-based treatment program for chronic school refusal Johan Strömbeck School absenteeism in ADHD – a scoping review Maud Palmgren, Viviann Nordin, Anna Lidblad, Sven Bölte, & Ulf Jonsson	Invited Address Chair: Malin Gren Landell CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 841 9868 5803 Password: 32321759 Lessons from Covid-19 for school attendance Kristof de Witte
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	10.15pm-11.15pm 1.15pm-2.15pm 7.15am-8.15am	Keynote Address 4 David Heyne, Leiden University, The Netherlands, & INSA. Collaboration: What we mean, why it's important, and how we're doing. CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 948 9913 2431 Password: mbw71zvc			
Melbourne (AEDT) Europe (CEST) USA (EDT)	11.15pm-11.30pm 2.15pm-2.30pm 8.15am-8.30am	Discussant Bruce Tonge, Monash University, Australia Conference Close with the Conference Committee. CLICK TO JOIN EVENT Zoom Meeting ID: 948 9913 2431 Password: mbw71zvc			

Day One: Abstracts

Keynote Address 1

Hedy Chang, Executive Director & Founder, Attendance Works, USA

Addressing Chronic Absence: An Essential Strategy for Educational Equity in the United States.

With hosts Lisa McKay-Brown & Glenn Melvin.

Over the past decade, chronic absence has evolved in the United States from a little known term to a national education metric. This session will begin with an overview of what made this remarkable journey possible. Hedy Chang will then share lessons learned from the United State about why chronic absence matters and how it can be reduced chronic absence through a comprehensive, data informed approach that emphasizes positive engagement not punitive action. She will discuss how chronic absence data can be used to target support and outreach to student and schools as well as provide real time feedback about whether positive conditions of learning are in place. The session will explore implications for practice, policy and research and how the Covid-19 pandemic has made paying attention to chronic absence an even more essential strategy for advancing educational equity.

Biography

Hedy Chang is the founder and executive director of the non-profit initiative, Attendance Works (www.attendanceworks.org) which advances student success and narrows equity gaps by addressing chronic absence. Since its founding in 2010, Attendance Works successfully moved chronic absence from a little-known term to a required reporting and optional school accountability metric in the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). A skilled presenter, facilitator, researcher and writer, Hedy co-authored the seminal report, Present, Engaged and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, as well as numerous other articles about student attendance.

Deeply committed to promoting two-generation solutions to achieving a more just and equitable society, Hedy has spent over three decades working in the fields of family support, family economic success, education and child development. She served as a senior program officer at the Evelyn and Walter Haas Jr. Fund and as co-director of California Tomorrow, a nonprofit dedicated to creating a just and inclusive multiracial, multicultural and multilingual society. In February 2013, Hedy was named by the White House as a Champion of Change for her commitment to furthering African American Education. She has a Master's degree in Public Policy from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and B.A. from Occidental College.

Parallel Session 1: Children at Risk

Chair: Rebecca McGrath

School attendance in children in out of home care.

Kitty Te Riele, University of Tasmania, Australia, Sharon Bessell, Australian National University, Australia, Tom Brunzell, Berry Street, Australia, Michael Guerzoni, University of Tasmania, Daryl Higgins, Joseph McDowall, The Create Foundation, Leanne McLean, Commissioner for Children and Young People Tasmania, Australia, Dale Murray, Life Without Barriers, Australia, Anna Sullivan, University of South Australia, Australia.

Children and young people living in Out Of Home Care (OOHC) experience some of the lowest levels of educational attainment of any group in Australia. Positive and high-quality education, at both primary and secondary school level, is vital for children and young people in OOHC to not only make their life better 'now'—but also enhance their future life opportunities.

Absence from school is a particularly significant concern for these students. We distinguish between five types of absence and will discuss how each affects students in OOHC. First, unauthorised absences, when a student is absent from school without a reason provided to the school—or the school does not accept the reason. Second, disciplinary absences, including include suspensions, exclusions, and expulsion from school. Third, part-time enrolment, when students are enrolled on a timetable of reduced hours, which is intended to be used only if it serves the best interest of the child. Fourth, detachment, where students are not merely absent for hours, days, or weeks but missing from school entirely for months or years. Finally, authorised absences, which at first sight may seem unproblematic since these have a reason that is formally accepted by schools—but which can detract significantly from full attendance for children and young people in OOHC.

We outline why efforts across all five types of absence by both education and OOHC providers are needed to increase attendance at school, and in turn improve education outcomes for students in Out Of Home Care.

The presentation and impact of school refusal behaviour in children on the autism spectrum.

Raechel Smart, Griffith University, Australia, Dawn Adams, Griffith University, Australia, Kate Simpson, Griffith University, Australia.

Socio-Emotional Learning: Adding Real-time outcomes data for behavior modification.

Carolyn Gentle-Genitty, Indiana University, USA, Francis Bowen, Butler University, USA, Jangmin Kim, Texas State University, USA and Marlin Jackson, Fight for Life Foundation, USA

Value for school is gained when students attend schools where specific efforts respond to their socio-emotional needs. Socio-emotional health is an integral factor in attendance because it captures students' feelings toward teachers, content, schooling, and education broadly. Moreso, SEL records reactions and behaviors to learning often manifested in traceable patterns of behavior and reporting. There are many pop-up storefronts regarding socio-emotional learning (SEL). It seems as if the pandemic shun a light in a dark corner and many now see the need for such programming to help students. Good social-emotional learning programs do not operate in isolation, but help students learn that their decisions determine their consequences while helping them foster skills in coping, self-awareness, and self-control thereby increasing their likelihood of school attendance and successful outcomes. Understanding socio-emotional and behavioral adjustments made by students during and following participation in SEL are the hallmarks which separate quick pop-ups from impact-driven programs. This presentation identifies gaps in one socio-emotional learning program leveraged in K-8 education in a Midwestern state and offers a solution. Many school systems have varied types of SEL. The challenge is most lack data collection, reporting, and outcomes data. The Building Dreams® is a two-pronged social, emotional learning program which 1) provides a teacher-implemented curriculum designed to teach social emotional concepts through analyzation of virtues, values, emotional, and character traits, and 2) houses a culturally relevant behavior management system to track and reward student behavior and class participation. It provides real-time data for intervention and timely response. The tool provides a platform for administrators and educators to gain insights into performance and behavioral trends of students, individual classes, or an overall school. Such information can be leveraged to offer guidance to those in need in less time than traditional methodologies. Moreover, the digital platform brings to light correlations that could otherwise go unnoticed, which leads to incremental improvement in policies and best practices. We conducted the analysis on 13,381 case records over one academic year and four schools. The findings suggest that when a program aligns with a digital platform to teach and track behaviors, students experience more positive behavioral outcomes in the school environment—in real-time, which translates to their long-term socio-emotional success in and outside the classroom and better school outcomes such as attendance and discipline.

Parallel Session 2: Understanding & Responding to Attendance Problems

Chair: Glenn Melvin

Associations Between Developmental Risk Profiles, Mental Disorders, and Student Absences Among Primary and Secondary Students in Australia

Kirsten Hancock, Telethon Kids Institute & The Smith Family, Australia.

This study assessed if the association between mental disorders and higher student absences varies across different profiles of risk factors, and estimated the proportion of student absences associated with mental disorders. Data included responses from a nationally representative Australian survey of child and adolescent mental health (Young Minds Matter, N=5,081). A latent class analysis identified four classes of multiple risk exposure for students and their families, including On Track (55%), Low Resources (22%), Child Concerns (15%), and Overwhelmed (7%). Negative binomial regression models with adjustment for misclassification probabilities showed that absence rate ratios were higher among students classified as Low Resources (1.8 times), Child Concerns (1.7 times), or Overwhelmed (3.0 times) than On Track students. Overall, students with an anxiety or depressive disorder had 1.2 times as many absences as students without a disorder, after adjusting for latent class membership. There was no support for the hypothesis that the association between anxiety/depressive disorder and absences would be greater for students experiencing multiple risk exposures. Behavioral disorders were not associated with higher absences. Mental disorders accounted for approximately 8.6% of absences among secondary students (Years 7–12) and 2.4% of absences among primary students (Years 1–6). The estimated contribution of mental disorders to school absences is not trivial; however, the contribution is about half that estimated by previous research. The educational impacts of mental disorders must be considered in conjunction with the broader social contexts related to both mental disorders and student absences.

Reducing chronic absenteeism in preschools in Chile: Evidence from a comparative study using 2011-2017 Ministry of Education data.

Mary Catherine Arbour, Harvard University, USA, Carolina Soto, Fundacion Educacional Oportunidad, Chile, Yanira Alee, Fundacion Educacional Oportunidad, Chile, Sidney Atwood, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, USA, Pablo Muñoz, Fundacion Educacional Oportunidad, Chile, Marcela Marzolo, Fundacion Educacional Oportunidad, Chile.

In Chile, early childhood education is universally accessible, but high absenteeism rates diminish its

impact on children's outcomes and its potential for redressing societal inequities. This study reports findings from a preschool professional development intervention in Chile from 2014-2015 that aimed to improve classroom quality, promote attendance and prevent chronic absenteeism (Un Buen Comienzo, UBC). We describe attendance intervention strategies and their implementation using continuous improvement methodology. We use publicly available Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) databases that contain individual-level daily attendance of all children enrolled in Chile's public schools and time series analyses to:

1. examine the average rates of absences and chronic absenteeism in 46 preschools in Chile's VI region from 2011 to 2017 (63,689 child-months of data), and
2. compare the evolution of absences and chronic absenteeism between three groups of schools: 27 comparison schools that did not participate in UBC, 14 schools that participated in UBC but did not prioritize attendance, and 5 schools that participated in UBC and prioritized attendance.

Results. Between 2011 and 2017, children were absent for 14.0-14.4% of school days, and 50.9% - 54.2% were chronically absent. There was no improvement in absences or chronic absenteeism in schools that did not participate in UBC. In schools that participated in UBC and prioritized attendance, average days absent and chronic absenteeism declined to 10% and 35%, respectively. These reductions were associated with consistent application of specific intervention strategies and implementation techniques. Implications for school leaders, researchers and policymakers will be discussed.

Can protective factors associated with resilience moderate the association between symptoms of depression and failure to complete upper secondary school?

Kristin Gärtner-Askeland, NORCE Norwegian Research Centre, Norway.

Introduction

Depressive symptoms are related to school dropout in late adolescence and have been described as a modifiable risk factor that could be targeted by interventions. The aim of the study was to identify protective factors that can hinder dropout among adolescents experiencing symptoms of depression.

Methods

Data stem from the youth@hordaland study conducted in Norway in 2012 linked with information from the national educational database, following participants until fall 2018. Of 8,665 participants aged 16-19 years, 53.7% were girls. Symptoms of depression and protective factors associated with resilience were assessed by self-report, while completion of upper secondary school and GPA stem from the national educational database.

Results

Goal-Orientation, Self-Confidence, Social Competence, Social Support, and Family Cohesion were all related to a lower risk of non-completion for both boys and girls. In the analyses including depression, Goal Orientation, Social Support and Family Cohesion were significant predictors for girls, while these factors and Self-Confidence were significant predictors for boys. Further, there were small positive interactions between symptoms of depression and Goal Orientation and Social Support for boys, suggesting that these factors were less protective with higher symptoms of depression. Still, the results support a main effect model, where the factors were equally protective regardless of the level of symptoms of depression.

Conclusions

The findings suggest that both personal and social protective factors can be important to bolster school completion among adolescents experiencing symptoms of depression and confirms family cohesion as an important protective factor in the context of school completion.

Assessing school attendance problems in Sweden and Finland -preliminary findings.

Johan Strömbeck. Åbo Akademi University, Finland.

In an ongoing research project assessment instruments are being prepared for use in Sweden and Finland. The revised version of the School Refusal Assessment Scale (SRAS-R; Kearney, 2002) as well as the Adapted SRAS-R (Heyne et al., 2017) were translated into Swedish and Finnish along with two new developments: Inventory of School Attendance Problems (ISAP; Knollman et al., 2018) and the School Non-Attendance Checklist (SNACK; Heyne et al., 2019). In addition to the validation of the instruments, descriptive data on school attendance problems (SAP), is collected in the study.

The student versions of instruments are examined in samples of high school aged pupils, with and without SAP (approximately 12-16 year olds), and the parent versions in samples of parents to high school students, separately in Sweden and in Finland (in Finland, both in Finnish and in Swedish). Data collection continues for some of the samples, but for the student samples in Finland, data collection has terminated.

We can now present some preliminary findings in the data collected in Finland during the spring 2021: 716 youth responded to the survey in Finnish. We will present data on prevalence of different forms of absence from school, measured by the different instruments, and associations to other factors that were measured (internalizing, externalizing symptoms, time spent online, diagnoses etc.).

Invited Address

Chair: Lisa McKay-Brown

Mothers' Experiences Supporting Their Autistic Children and Adolescents With School Refusal Behaviour.

Deborah Gray.

There is a dearth of research that has examined school refusal behaviour of Autistic students, without accompanying intellectual disability, in the mainstream education system. The present study explored the lived experiences of mothers supporting Autistic students, without accompanying intellectual disability, who were experiencing school refusal behaviour in Australian mainstream school systems to further understanding of the issue. A relational ecological framework of school attendance utilising Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) and bioecological model of human development (2007), together with Lazarus' (1999) stress and coping theory provided guiding frameworks and theories to explore the subjective, phenomenological lived experiences of mothers supporting their Autistic children with school refusal behaviour. Eight mothers of Autistic children or adolescents without accompanying intellectual disability, aged five to 18 years, who had experienced school refusal behaviour in Australian mainstream school systems participated in this study.

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was selected as an appropriate approach to explore the meaning of the mothers' personal and social experiences as parents of an Autistic student who had experienced school refusal behaviour. Three overarching interrelated themes were identified that captured the interrelated social and psychological stress and emotions, challenges and coping processes utilised by the mothers. Three themes included the unrelenting effort, the search for understanding and psychosocial impact on self. The mothers have provided a range of recommendations for how to support their children. A relational ecological framework for school attendance provides a paradigm shift in exploring school refusal behaviour.

Biography

Deborah Gray is a registered psychologist who works in the disability sector and is working within the National Disability Insurance System (NDIS) in Australia. This includes supporting and building the capacity of NDIS participants, their informal support system, community support system, mainstream systems, and NDIS service providers. Deb is working towards endorsement as a Community Psychologist. Future research interests include multi-level prevention interventions to reduce and overcome child and adolescent mental health conditions and behavioural challenges including major depressive disorder, anxiety disorders, substance misuse, peer victimisation (school-bullying), and school attendance

problems. Deb is a founding member and admin of the closed Facebook group School Can't [School Phobia / School Refusal Australia].

School Can't Not Won't the Power of a Lens Change.

Louise Rogers, Parent Advocate, Rebecca Gelsi, Community Development Worker & Parent Advocate, Tiffany Westphal, Social Worker & Parent Advocate, Melinda Carritt, Geographer & Parent Advocate

"School Can't" is an Australian Facebook and face to face peer support group for parents and legal guardians who are supporting their own children through school attendance difficulties. Their children are typically between ages 5 and 17. The group is moderated by a team of volunteer parents/carers with lived experience of School Can't, some of whom will share the learnings of this special group in this presentation.

During the presentation, Louise Rogers, will define what we mean by "School Can't" and outline common barriers to school attendance as perceived by parents. Rebecca Gelsi, will talk about the "School Can't journey - what the typical parent and their child has experienced before joining and the role the group plays in supporting, resourcing and empowering parents. Tiffany Westphal, will share how the frameworks of understanding developed by Stuart Shanker, Ross Greene, Mona Delahooke and Stephen Porges serve to transform parental understanding of school attendance difficulties and empower parents (along with clinicians and school staff) to better understand and support their children. Finally, Melinda Carritt, will discuss our lived experience knowledge of collaboration. Melinda will identify barriers to collaboration and describe what good collaboration entails.

Round Table Discussions

Matthew White, Catholic Diocese of Parramatta, Australia

Leading Attendance Together

Once an administrative task, attendance is now considered a key performance indicator of schools' effectiveness, aligned with academic and wellbeing outcomes. This round table discussion will engage participants through a case study of a change process we are undertaking to align our system with the current paradigm of attendance.

Participants will gain a shared understanding of leading change in attendance. They will develop knowledge of some change tools they may apply to facilitate thinking and communication of the change. Lastly, it is hoped that there is a sharing of best practice towards establishing collaboratively cultures in schools and across systems.

Lisa McKay Brown, University of Melbourne, Australia & Glenn Melvin, Deakin University, Australia

Establishing a School Attendance Research Collaboration in Australia

Research collaborations on school attendance in Australia are currently limited. This Round Table will discuss the current state of research into school attendance in Australia and open dialogue amongst those interested collaborating on research projects. The aim is to commence the development of a more formalised national network and to identify research opportunities that can be undertaken at a local, state, and national levels. This Round Table is not limited to researchers and academics but all who are interested in furthering research on school attendance in Australia including practitioners, education and school staff, parents and policy makers.

Johanna Taylor, University of Melbourne

It looks school refusal...now what? Identifying and responding to early signs of school refusal in young students with autism.

The number of young people with autism who school refuse mean specific attention to first response strategies for youth with autism is warranted. This requires collaboration between school-based personnel and families, an awareness of how school refusal may initially present in young people with autism and knowledge of early supports strategies.

Participants will be able to

- Identify some early signs of school refusal including how these may appear in students with autism.
- Identify practical strategies that can be used to support students who show early signs of school refusal.
- Describe the relevance of school refusal strategies discussed for students across the autism spectrum.

Marije Brouwer-Borghuis, SWV Regio Almelo VO/ VSO 2301, The Netherlands & Patricia Graczyk, The University of Illinois at Chicago

Participating in International Collaborations: How Not to Reinvent the Wheel

During this Round Table topic we will share how our international collaboration (US and the Netherlands) involving the implementation of an Rtl model for school attendance has started out and has evolved during the last schoolyear. We will address the benefits and challenges and discuss further possibilities for international collaboration.

Professionals will know what lessons were learned while implementing an US model for promoting school attendance in the Netherland. Professionals will have heard about the "fun" part of such collaboration, the enthusiasm and synergy it can create. Professionals will have thought about ways to promote international collaboration.

Keynote Address 2

Megan Gilmour, CEO Missing School.

Don't Wait Until They're Well: Policy and technology to keep sick kids connected to school.

COVID-19 has highlighted the significant impact that education gaps and lack of access to peers are having on the current generation of students. However, there is a growing cohort of kids who miss school as a result of chronic physical or mental health disorders that are still being overlooked.

In schools across developed countries, up to 30% of students have an illness serious enough to affect their attendance, with millions in homes and hospitals experiencing isolation from their schools, teachers and peers. Some students miss days and weeks, others miss months and even years. Their chronic absence causes exclusion and isolation, and can lead to academic, social and emotional hardship, now and in the future.

But we don't have to leave our sick kids behind. Medical science is saving or prolonging lives. Our education systems can innovate to keep pace. Sick kids need real-time inclusion in their classrooms, ongoing engagement with their peers and teachers, and the emotional support that comes from connecting to their student identity and belonging in their learning community.

In Australia, we have the legislation and technology, now we just need the policy to get sick kids back into their classrooms. Through a theory of change developed from the lived experience, and by combining research from Australia and overseas, this talk taps in to where we are now and where we can be when policymakers, parents, and practitioners collaborate to catalyse cultural change.

Biography

Megan Gilmour is a social innovator who has worked on complex social and economic development operations across 24 countries. She's skilled in conceptualising and raising funding for dynamic innovation projects, and a leader in governance and systems, research and advocacy for students missing school because of serious illness.

In 2015, Megan co-authored an Australian-first report on school connection for sick students which received a Prime Minister's statement of support, and triggered widespread interest. She then led action for a corresponding Australian government report, and designed the governance framework that shaped its findings. In 2017, Megan created the Australian-first national telepresence robot initiative connecting students with serious illness to their classrooms.

She's a Churchill Fellow, a media spokesperson and TEDx Speaker, and was nominated as a finalist for the ACT Australian of the Year award in 2018. In 2019 she was ACT winner and national finalist in the Telstra Business Women's Awards in the For

Purpose and Social Enterprise category, named on the Financial Review list of 100 Women of Influence in Australia, and received the CWB Innovation Award. Her work is passionately driven by her experience as a mother to a young son who survived a two-year battle for life.

Parallel Session 3: School Refusal

Chair: Johanna Taylor

On the way to a road map for school refusal interventions.

Marije Brouwer-Borghuis, SWV Regio Almelo VO/ VSO 2301, The Netherlands & David Heyne, Leiden University, The Netherlands.

The research project 'Knowing What Works: On the way to a road map for school refusal interventions', identified which interventions for school-refusing youth are operating in the Netherlands within education and mental health care and what the most important elements of these interventions are. For this study 21 school refusal interventions all through the Netherlands were visited for in-depth focus group interviews with 76 professionals. In addition to the interviews, questionnaires were filled in by young persons that participated in the interventions and their parents, thereby combining the voices of youth, parents, and professionals from education and mental health care. In the roadmap the insights derived via this study will be made available for current and future professionals who plan to provide an intervention for school refusal or fine-tune an existing intervention. This will likely prevent different organizations needing to re-invent the wheel and thereby saving precious time. During the presentation, experiences with conducting this research and the preparation of the roadmap will be shared and the 14 building blocks, that are identified as essential conditions for effective interventions for school refusal, will be shown. Ideas about how to make these building blocks operational for practice will be discussed.

Responding to school refusal using a three-phase intervention model.

Sonja Van Buuren, Travancore School, Australia.

School Refusal is a growing area of concern for families, school staff and mental health practitioners. The causes of school refusal are often multi-layered and complex including anxiety and mood disorders, learning difficulties and challenging family situations. When School Refusal occurs it can cause great amounts of stress and conflict within the family home and it can be very challenging to increase school attendance. This paper presents the multi-disciplinary intervention model for School Refusal, 'In2School', using a case study approach. There is currently little research into School Refusal with a focus on education using a case study approach.

'In2School' is a three-phase model of intervention delivered in partnership between hospital school teachers, an outpatient mental health service and The University of Melbourne. This study examines the phases of the intervention and elements of the program that contributed to improved school attendance for three students, two females and one male aged 12-14 years. Three key elements were identified including: a multi-disciplinary team approach; flexible school arrangements; and building the individual's social and emotional skills such as self-awareness, coping and resilience. The case studies reveal that the journey back into consistent school attendance varies for each student and an individual approach to School Refusal is critical. Recommendations for improving school attendance using the three key elements of the 'In2School' intervention are discussed.

Adapting an online parenting program to support parents of school-refusing adolescents with clinical-level anxiety or depression:

A qualitative study.

Anna Smout, Monash University, Australia, Marie Yap, Monash University, Australia, Glenn Melvin, Deakin University, Australia, Patrick Olivier, Monash University, Australia.

Background

The co-occurrence of adolescent school refusal with anxiety and depressive disorders is a complex issue associated with severe, ongoing impairment. Novel intervention approaches are needed, and the targeting of parents/caregivers holds promise due to a) their role as a conduit between adolescent, school and family systems, and b) prior evidence that demonstrates that parent focused interventions improve school attendance. The present study sought to obtain the voice of lived experience from parents of school-refusing adolescents who received the Therapist-assisted Online Parenting Strategies Program (TOPS), an online parenting intervention designed to equip parents with evidence-based strategies to respond to clinical-level internalising problems in their adolescent. The aim of this study was to understand how TOPS could be adapted to better support parents of school-refusing adolescents and foster school return, as the program does not directly address school refusal.

Method

Qualitative interviews were conducted with 14 parents who a) received the TOPS program as part of a single-arm, open label trial (N=66 parent-child dyads), and b) reported school-refusal problems in their teen during the trial (N=23). Data was analysed using thematic analysis with themes identified inductively.

Results

Four key themes were abstracted from the data reflecting parent views about how TOPS could best support them in responding to school refusal: Working together with schools, promoting parent

agency and facilitating individualisation throughout program engagement, the significance of understanding their adolescents' difficulties, and un/helpful program features (existing and proposed).

Conclusion

This qualitative study delineated the ways in which the TOPS program supported parents in responding to adolescent school refusal and supporting school return, as well as how the program could be further enhanced to this end. Working collaboratively with schools was a named priority for parents. Findings from the present study will directly inform the co-design of the next iteration of the TOPS program (TOPS-Ed), optimised for school refusal.

Implementation of a CBT program in the management of anxious school refusal.

Hélène Denis, University Hospital CHU Montpellier.

Anxious school refusal (ASR), also known as school phobia in adolescents, is a little-known clinical entity, not listed in international classifications, and yet it is constantly on the increase in France, as in many countries around the world. The COVID 19 pandemic and the health measures put in place have largely contributed to this increase. RSA belongs to the spectrum of anxiety disorders and concerns adolescents who, despite a desire and real potential for school, find themselves unable to overcome excessive anxiety about school. This results in partial or total school absenteeism, with academic, social and professional repercussions, as well as intense suffering for the young people and their entourage. The management of anxious school refusal is not codified. There is a consensus on the need for early, active and intensive intervention. While cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) has been shown to be effective in the treatment of anxiety disorders in children and adolescents, there is a lack of studies on ASR. The challenge of treating these patients is to get them back into school quickly and sustainably. The follow-up of these young people can be organised according to the intensity of the anxiety and the school dropout, in consultation or in day hospitalisation. A regional hospital clinical research project (PHRC) has enabled the study of a structured and protocolised treatment based on cognitive and behavioural therapy in 4 centres in the south of France. The Montpellier adolescent unit, as a pilot unit, has guided the Marseille, Béziers and Nîmes units in implementing a care organisation based on CBT with the main objective of returning to school. This research will measure the effectiveness of this CBT protocol, based on the effective return to school at the beginning of the next school year and on the reduction of anxiety. During the 2020/2021 school year, we included 29 patients in the 4 centres, 9 of whom interrupted the protocol prematurely for various reasons. We will be able to present a description of this population, the number of patients who managed to return to school in September 2021 and the results of anxiety assessments before and after the CBT programme.

The treatment of young schoolchildren who have completely dropped out of school allows us to use similar tools for the treatment of less severe anxious school refusals. Thus, the dissemination of knowledge of these clinical pictures and of the methods of management could make it possible to modify the hitherto pejorative prognosis of these anxious young people.

Parallel Session 4: Symposium – Examination of Spanish adolescents' profiles: school refusal behavior, perfectionism and affect

Chair: Lisa McKay

Symposium Abstract

During the last years, our research team has published several articles applying profile analysis. Identifying groups of students at risk for psychological and educational problems has been one of our main goals. School Refusal Behavior (SRB) has been one of the main areas of research differentiating the most common groups based on the functional model that can maintain SRB (I. Avoidance of stimuli that provoke negative affectivity, II. Escape from aversive social and /or evaluative situations, III. Pursuit of attention from significant others, and IV. Pursuit of tangible rewards outside of school). In addition, we have studied the relationship of this problem with other psychological variables such as perfectionism or affect. The aim of this symposium is twofold: (1) to reflect about the SRB profiles identified, and to analyse whether these profiles differ from each other in school anxiety, and (2) to analyse the impact of SRB in different perfectionist and affective profiles. The oral presentations of this symposium will allow to know in greater depth the heterogeneity of groups of students with SRB and their relationship with school anxiety. In addition, this symposium makes available data about the identification of perfectionist and affective profiles and their relationship with SRB. All these findings are based on Spanish adolescents and the research has been funded by national and regional projects interested in this issue. From this symposium, it is expected to offer results that allow clarifying the characteristics of these students as well as proposing challenges and lines of action to prevent school attendance problems.

Functional profiles of school refusal behavior and school anxiety in Spanish adolescents.

Carolina González, University of Alicante, Spain, Ricardo Sanmartín, University of Alicante, Spain, María Vicent, University of Alicante, Spain, José Manuel García-Fernández, University of Alicante, Spain.

The heterogeneous nature of school refusal behavior has led to multiple efforts across decades to determine the characteristics of this population. Research with Spanish adolescents has identified key functional school refusal behavior profiles that can differentiate subgroups of students with school attendance problems. The aim of this communication is to identify different school refusal behavior profiles and to determine whether these profiles differ from each other in school anxiety. The School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised (SRAS-R) and the School Anxiety Inventory (SAI) were employed for assessing, respectively, four conditions of school refusal behavior (I. Avoidance of Negative Affectivity, II. Escape from Social and/or Evaluative situations, III. Pursuit of Attention and IV. Pursuit of Tangible Reinforcement), four situational factors (I. Anxiety about academic failure and punishment, II. Anxiety about aggression, III. Anxiety about Social Evaluation, and IV. Anxiety about Academic Evaluation) and three response systems (Cognitive response, Behavioral response and Psychophysiological response) of school anxiety. Five school refusal behavior profiles were identified: Non-School Refusal Behavior, Mixed School Refusal Behavior, School Refusal Behavior by Positive Reinforcement, Low School Refusal Behavior, and High School Refusal Behavior. The results indicated that High School Refusal Behavior and Mixed School Refusal Behavior groups obtained the highest mean scores on school anxiety. In contrast, Non-School Refusal and School Refusal Behavior by Positive Reinforcement groups revealed the lowest scores in school anxiety. Findings of this communication are discussed in relation to the importance of promoting good mental health to prevent school attendance problems.

Studying the relationship between affective latent profiles and school refusal behaviour in Spanish youth population.

Ricardo Sanmartín, University of Alicante, Spain, Carolina González, University of Alicante, Spain, María Vicent, University of Alicante, Spain, José Manuel García-Fernández, University of Alicante, Spain.

Due to the lack of studies analysing the connection between affect and school refusal behaviour, the current communication pretends to detect affective latent profiles and to study the differences in school refusal behaviour scores among the identified profiles. The sample was formed by 1816 Spanish students from 15 to 18 years old ($M = 16.39$; $SD = 1.05$). The two subscales of the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule for Children-Short Form were used to identify the affective latent profiles and the four subscales of the School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised for Children were administered to study the differences of school refusal behaviour scores. After analysing the affective latent profiles, five groups were identified combining the scores of positive and negative affect: self-fulfilling profile

(high positive affect and relatively low negative affect), self-destructive profile (low positive affect and high negative affect), low affective profile (low scores in positive and negative affect), low positive affect profile (low positive affect) and high affective profile (high positive and negative affect). The two affective profiles that obtained the highest scores of school refusal behaviour were: self-destructive (three first factors) and high affective profile (fourth factor). On the other hand, the self-fulfilling (first two factors) and the low affective profile (last two factors) obtained the lowest scores in school refusal behaviour. The results of this communication provide useful information regarding the possibility of enhancing adaptive affective profiles, such as the case of self-fulfilling profile, in detection and intervention programs for reducing school refusal behaviour.

2 x 2 model of dispositional perfectionism and school refusal behavior.

María Vicent, University of Alicante, Spain, Carolina González, University of Alicante, Spain, Ricardo Sanmartín, University of Alicante, Spain, José Manuel García-Fernández, University of Alicante, Spain.

This study aims to analyse the relationship between perfectionism profiles and school refusal behaviour. A sample composed by 1558 adolescents aged between 12 and 28 years old ($Age = 14.83$, $SD = 1.86$) participated in this study. The Child and Adolescent Perfectionism Scale (CAPS) and the School Refusal Assessment Scale-Revised (SRAS-R) were employed for assessing, respectively, two perfectionist dimensions (i.e., Socially Prescribed Perfectionism, SPP, and Self-Oriented Perfectionism, SOP) as well as four factors of school refusal behavior (i.e., I. Avoidance of Negative Affectivity, II. Escape from Social and/or Evaluative situations, III. Pursuit of Attention and IV. Pursuit of Tangible Reinforcement). Four perfectionist subtypes were identified through quick cluster analysis method: Non-perfectionists (low SOP and SPP), Mixed (high SOP and SPP), Pure SPP (high SPP and low SOP) and Pure SOP (high SOP and low SPP). Non-Perfectionist and Mixed profiles reported, respectively, the lowest and highest mean scores in school refusal behavior. Post hoc analyses showed significant differences for all the comparisons between Non-Perfectionists and Mixed Perfectionism excepting on factor IV. Non-Perfectionists reported lower levels on factors I, III and IV of school refusal behavior when compared with Pure SPP. In comparison with Pure SOP, Non-Perfectionists scored significantly lower on factors I and III. Additionally, significant differences were found between the Mixed profile and Pure SOP in the first three factors of the SRAS-R. Results suggest that the combination of high levels of both SOP and SPP may be a vulnerability factor for the first three explanatory factors of school refusal behavior.

Invited Address

Chair: Glenn Melvin

Navigator – A school re-engagement program supporting young people holistically to identify their educational goals and plan a pathway to their aspirations.

Sandra Inserra & Kerryn Williams.

Supporting young people to stay in education can assist them to reach their potential and lead to better life opportunities. Navigator works with young people to overcome challenges, pursue a positive educational pathway, and achieve their goals. This presentation will provide an overview of the context and background of the Navigator program's initial development and subsequent expansion across Victoria, and how it fits within the Department of Education and Training's broader policy framework. The session will take a deeper dive into the key features of the Western Melbourne Anglicare Navigator program, including its Advantaged Thinking lens and holistic, student-centred and collaborative approach to working alongside young people. Case studies and the voices of young people who have participated in Navigator will be featured. The presentation will highlight the additional challenges, opportunities and learnings posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the experiences of the Western Melbourne Navigator program in supporting young people, families and schools during these times.

Sandra Inserra

In addition to several years of tertiary studies in Education, Community Services, Counselling and Frontline Management, Sandra's passion for supporting young people spans over an extensive work history of 25 years. Sandra valued her educational opportunities, thrived on learning and was the first of her family to attend university.

As a teacher she was committed to ensuring her students enjoyed learning and felt safe at school. This passion led to a career change where she worked alongside young people in a Youth Work and Youth Counselling capacity with a focus on empowering them to be hopeful and believe in themselves. After several years of direct work Sandra took on various Child, Youth and Family front line leadership and senior management roles both in Local Government and a not for profit organisation, Anglicare Victoria.

Sandra's approach to leadership is similar to her client work, she uses strength based approaches and thrives on seeing her staff feeling passionate about their work, committed to their program goals and continuous improvement of service delivery and positive about supporting opportunities for young people.

Sandra requested to lead the implementation of the Western Melbourne Navigator Program for Anglicare Victoria and has supported the development of two additional AV Navigator programs, across Wimmera and Loddon Campaspe, and a partnership with Barwon Child Youth and Family for the delivery of a 4th Navigator program in Victoria.

Kerryn Williams

Kerryn Williams has been with the Department of Education and Training since 2017 - for the past three years as Western Melbourne Navigator Coordinator - and has a longstanding passion for free, inclusive, quality education for all. Prior to joining DET, Kerryn worked at the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, and has previously held roles in the community sector, including with health, Aboriginal and migrant organisations. She holds a Master of Communication and spent many years as an editor. Kerryn has also volunteered for a variety of organisations including parent, youth, and refugee rights groups.

Day Two: Abstracts

Keynote Address 3

Chris Varney, Founder & Chief Enabling Officer, ICAN Network (Australia)

Leveraging peer support programs to maintain school connection during COVID-19.

Chris Varney will leverage his team's experience with helping 102 government and non-government Australian schools adjust to the COVID-19 context. Specifically Chris will explore I CAN School mentoring program results which indicate that peer support is a demonstrable strategy to maintain school connection during remote learning. Chris runs I CAN Network Ltd which is Australia's largest provider of Autistic led services which includes the Victorian and Queensland based I CAN School program. Chris is proudly Autistic and founded I CAN Network in 2013 based on his positive experience in primary and secondary school.

Biography

Chris Varney is Founder and Chief Enabling Officer of I CAN Network. Growing up with Asperger's, Chris was inspired to start I CAN from the support his family, schools and mentors gave him, which he shared in his TEDx 'Autism – How My Unstoppable Mother Proved the Experts Wrong'. In the past year alone, I CAN Network has mentored 1,052 Autistic kids, teenagers and adults nationwide through schools, TAFEs, workplaces, camps and online programs. Since inception in 2013, I CAN Network has employed 34 Autistic people to deliver mentoring programs. Chris has a background in children's rights. Chris spent 11 years with World Vision Australia and World Vision International where his roles included Youth Ambassador, VGen Co-Director and Manager of Youth Supporters. VGen was instrumental in achieving commitments to fair-trade from big chocolate companies.

In 2009 Chris was Australian Youth Representative to the United Nations. In this role Chris successfully campaigned for the closure of the Magill Training Centre and created Dear Kevin: a book of 789 handwritten letters by children and young people given to then-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd. Chris' efforts as Youth Representative were recognised in this letter from then-UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Chris used the stories from Dear Kevin to inform his work on the steering committee of the Australian Child Rights NGO Taskforce. The Taskforce successfully influenced the creation of Australia's national Children's Commission.

In addition to I CAN, Chris is currently an advisor on Autism to the Queensland Government and is Patron of the Australian Association for Special Education.

Parallel Session 5: Child, Adolescent, Parent and School Perspectives.

Chair: David Heyne

Why do I come to school? - Adolescents' projects in a Change Laboratory as sources for improved school attendance.

Piia Ruutu, CRADLE, University of Helsinki, Finland, Pauliina Rantavuori, University of Tampere, Finland, Maria Tapola-Haapala, CRADLE, University of Helsinki, Finland, Yrjö Engeström, CRADLE, University of Helsinki.

In our project funded by the Academy of Finland (2019–2023) In Search for Significance: Fostering movement across the worlds of adolescents we seek to identify and test ways in which adolescents can find and cultivate significance in their lives, understood as perspectives and actions that connect the adolescents' personal interests with activities and projects for a just and equitable world.

In this presentation, we bring to discussion our preliminary findings based on the intervention conducted in a middle school in Helsinki Finland. Fourteen students worked with four researcher-interventionists in a Change Laboratory (CL) on five different long-term projects during one school year. CL is a method for formative research intervention for agency building and expansive learning. The data collected in the CL intervention contains field notes, 50 recorded interviews of students, school staff and other key informants, and 19 recorded CL and follow-up sessions.

We believe that the key to preventing adolescents from withdrawal, alienation, and exclusion in schools is to authorize adolescents themselves to take action in improving school attendance. The interventionist model generated in this project is important in our time which is characterized by climate change, extremism, and experiences of alienation and inequality. This presentation contributes to the conference by presenting a preventative intervention model and adolescents' own views on school attendance.

Children's perspectives on problematic school absenteeism.

Line Raae Lund. Børns Vilkår, Denmark.

"Children's Welfare (Børns Vilkår) is conducting research on school absenteeism in Denmark. The purpose is to enable children to bring their perspectives on the causes behind school absenteeism and how to prevent school absenteeism in the future. The results in the presentation are based on a mixed methods design with 11 qualitative

interviews with children and two surveys with more than 4.000 children from municipal primary and lower secondary school. Furthermore a statistical analysis based on data from danish registers (e.g. health) and administrative data on absenteeism will be explored.

The results highlight the need for more detailed registration practice in schools that also includes patterns in children's absenteeism, for example absence on specific days, from specific lessons and even older siblings' absence from school. The studies also highlight the importance of including children, even from a young age, and let them be a part of the investigation of causes and the cure."

Missing The Mark - How to See the Child Not Just the Diagnosis.

Eliza Fricker, Missing the Mark, UK.

Using her illustrations Eliza Fricker presents a letter to her child on their experiences as family with a child who struggles to attend school.

Eliza Fricker writes and illustrates a blog "Missing the Mark", a deeply personal and all too human exploration of a mother's journey navigating the education system and everyday life with a child who can't go to school.

Deceptively simple illustrations give way to endearingly perceptive and detailed observations, which are often irreverently humorous and highly emotional.

Missing the Mark is not only a beautiful artistic expression of difference in today's society, it also serves as a thought provoking and valuable contribution to the visibility, acceptance and support of families like Eliza's. It acts as a way to communicate difficult circumstances with teachers, educators, social workers, other parents and friends of those also experiencing these issues, with the hope of providing a drop more humanity in the world.

Parallel Session 6: School Attendance in the time of Covid-19.

Chair: Lana Van Den Berghe

Impact of the coronacrisis on youth, parents, and youth-professionals.

Thijs Tuenter, Nederlands Jeugdinstituut, The Netherlands.

During the corona-outbreak it soon became clear that the multiple lockdown's have a strong impact on children, young adults and their caretakers, also in the Netherlands. As a knowledge institute focused on youth-issues and -policy, the Netherlands Youth Institute is actively trying to get more insights in the consequences of the coronacrisis. Therefore

we actively gather information and data from current studies and dashboards, in which we focus on a variety of domains: physical health, mental wellbeing, school performances, financial situation, family relations, social network, leisure time, corona-measures, future perspectives, youthcare and educational structures. Our goal is to create an overview. To show what all these different studies found on how Dutch youth, parents and professionals are going through the crisis. And to elaborate on what this means for our policy, during and after the coronacrisis. In this 15 minute-presentation we will present the main findings from our wide search.

The effects of covid-19 on high school students' school attendance in Finland.

Katarina Alanko, Åbo Akademi University, Finland & Johan Strömbeck, Åbo Akademi University, Finland, Linda Kuhlberg, Åbo Akademi University, Finland.

In an ongoing research project on school attendance problems (SAP) in Finland, one of the aims was to investigate the effects of covid -19 on SAP. Students and parents responded to ten covid-19 related items, specifically created for this study. The participant rated the change in SAP and items measuring the dimensions of emotional, behavioral and cognitive school belonging, comparing the situation at the time of the data collection (late spring 2021) to the time period before the outbreak of the pandemic (before March 2020). The final sample consisted of high school aged pupils, with and without SAP (approximately 12-16 year olds), N= 1679, recruited via voluntary schools in different parts of the country. Data from parents continues to be collected. Preliminary findings on the data collected among youth, on the effects of covid-19 will be presented.

A qualitative exploration of school attendance problems in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in the UK: parent and educational professionals' perspectives.

Brontë McDonald, University of Sussex/ NIHR ARC - starting well, Daniel Michelson, University of Sussex, Kathryn J. Lester, University of Sussex.

In the UK, the government attempted to curb the spread of Covid-19 by closing schools to most pupils. Schools fully re-opened from March 2021, but attendance rates in schools remain considerably lower than in previous years with autumn 2020 having an overall absence rate of 11.3% (compared to 4.9% in Autumn 2019) (DfE, 2021). We qualitatively explored school attendance problems (SAP) within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic in order to understand the presentation of SAP, and identify contributory factors and opportunities for intervention. Twenty-nine parents of primary-school children experiencing SAP, and nineteen educational professionals from Sussex, UK completed a qualitative survey. Inductive thematic

analysis identified three preliminary higher-order themes 'Presentation of SAP', 'Contributors to SAP' and 'Support for SAP'. Emotionally-based school avoidance was common while children with SEND also faced significant challenges with SAP. Heightened child and parent anxieties about risks from Covid-19 and academic and social challenges associated with returning to school were identified as important contributory factors. Some effective support for SAP was identified and was often characterized by school and home working closely together. However, many parents reported receiving no support and uncertainty about how to access help for their child. Our preliminary findings provide important insights into contributory factors for SAP in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic and highlight a need for better support for families. In-depth interviews will be used to explore emerging themes in greater depth and findings used to inform the development of a co-produced intervention for families of primary school children.

Invited Address

Chair: Irma de Wit

Interprofessional collaboration – Missing voices on stage.

Hans Schuman.

The World Health Organisation defines interprofessional collaboration as “multiple health workers from different professional backgrounds working together with patients, families, carers and communities to deliver the highest quality of care across settings” [1].

Research indicates that educational, health and care professionals find it often challenging working as a team sharing a common purpose; recognising and respecting each other's body of knowledge and responsibilities; displaying mutual respect and trust; and realising synergy among team members.

Actively engaging children and young people who need extra support and care and their parents as equal members of the team and securing that their voices are heard and given due weight, seem to be even more challenging for these professionals.

In particular the children and young people seem to be left out of the decision-making process regarding the support and care they may need and deem appropriate to overcome the barriers they encounter during their educational career and in everyday life in and outside the school.

Raising awareness of the content of international treaties regarding the voice of children and what children are capable of at a certain age and making use of person driven planning activities may stimulate and support professionals to taking children more seriously, listening to them more

intentionally and carefully and involving them as co-decision-makers at every stage of a support programme, may support professionals to develop more appropriate and user-dedicated support and care .

Biography

Hans Schuman PhD worked as a teacher and coordinator in a special secondary school for students with visual impairment in the Netherlands. He has published two books and several articles about accessible gardening and horticulture activities for people with a visual impairment.

Research for his doctoral degree focused on the impact of a visual impairment on family relationships and personal well-being, the struggle for inclusion, the development of an empowering curriculum and supporting students with learning disabilities to speak out for themselves.

Diversity, participation, interprofessional collaboration, citizenship and the inclusion of people with disabilities are the main themes of his research, which he combines with a participatory action research approach. Hence he seeks to include the people who are affected by his research as co-researchers.

Schuman has presented at international conferences and participated in international projects; for example, in Turkey, Malawi, Azerbaijan and Ukraine, as well as in several EU-funded educational projects, e.g. Inclusive Early Childhood Education and Care and recently in an Erasmus+ project called Proud to teach all, in which researchers of five EU countries are working together with teachers and school staff to learn how to make schools more inclusive.

He was a senior lecturer and researcher at the Utrecht University of Applied Sciences in the master's programme Educational Needs. He was also working for the Research and Development Unit at Heliomare, a rehabilitation centre and a four special schools with about 1000 students. His work for Heliomare focused on innovation and curriculum development and interprofessional collaboration through practice-oriented research projects with teachers, support staff, parents and students who work closely together to enhance the students' overall Quality of Life and stimulate them to reach their potential. The research group was supported by professional learning communities composed of staff working in one of the four special schools.

Key recent publications are on interprofessional collaboration, inclusion and the voice of children and young people.

Pet 1st of July 2021 Schuman has retired.

[1] World Health Organization (2010). Framework for action on interprofessional education and collaborative practice. Geneva, Switzerland: WHO.

Round Table Discussions

Sandra Inserra, Anglicare, Australia & Kerryn Williams, Department of Education & Training Victoria, Australia

What does support to re-engage students, who present with a complexity of needs and barriers, look like for schools and services around the globe and how can we learn from each-other?

This discussion aims to

- Share inspirational examples of supports provided for young people and learnings from delivering these supports
- Develop an understanding of common themes presenting from the discussions about best practice and challenges
- Explore opportunities for potential collaboration.

Aggie Öhman, Öhman Institutet/ Prestationsprinsen & Malin Gren-Landell, Linköpings kommun, Sweden

Successful vertical collaboration on national school attendance data

We will discuss what distinguishes successful school attendance data driven collaboration between politicians – school authorities – local authorities – municipalities – school districts – schools in participants' countries. What has proven relevant to measure? On which parameters are school attendance data analyzed and which information is derived to make stakeholders understand, take, and support fruitful measures?

We hope to find:

- success factors and pitfalls in working with school attendance data on a national level.
- parameters that may successfully guide politicians and national authorities in their decisions and support of local authorities and schools.
- experience from different ways of defining parameters, levels to follow up, designations etc.

Lana Van Den Berghe, University of Ghent, Belgium

Young researchers speak out: The collaborative exchange of inquiry

During this round table discussion, young researchers will get the chance to exchange about their current research and research projects. Central questions are: 'How can research support the aim of improving school attendance?' and 'How can research support the development of a collaborative network to improve school attendance?'

Parallel Session 7: Collaboration

Chair: Gil Keppens

Collaborating Across the Pond: Our road trip together to promote school attendance and address school attendance problems in Dutch schools.

Patricia Graczyk, The University of Illinois at Chicago & Marije Brouwer-Borghuis, SWV Regio Almelo VO/ VSO 2301, The Netherlands

In the Netherlands efforts to implement Kearney and Graczyk's (2014, 2020) RTI pyramid model to promote school attendance and address school attendance problems in schools have recently begun. The Proeftuin, a pilot project being conducted in schools in Region Twente located in the eastern part of the Netherlands, represents one such effort. In this presentation we will discuss how our international collaboration to support the Proeftuin started and has evolved over the past school year. We will cover such topics as current national policies related to attendance in the Netherlands, how the Proeftuin emerged from the Region Twente vision, and how we organized initial training workshops and on-site support for implementing schools. We also will share the benefits and challenges of conducting international work that we have discovered, the "lighter side" of our collaboration, lessons learned, how our work is gaining attention from various groups across the Netherlands, and next steps in our journey together. Our hope is that the story of our roadtrip together will inspire others to consider participating in international collaborations to advance their own work.

How a single researcher can aid a municipality in evaluating a complex intervention to promote school attendance.

Kristin Gärtner-Askeland, NORCE Norwegian Research Centre, Norway.

In the 'Program for public health projects' in Norway, municipalities can apply for funding to develop and implement interventions to promote quality of life and mental health in the municipality. In Bjørnafjorden municipality in Western Norway, a project called VerdSett (direct translation: appreciated) has received funding from 2021 and is currently being implemented. The overall goal of the project is to increase attendance and prevent exclusion by working together to strengthen mental health and coping ability among children in the municipality. VerdSett aims to promote school attendance through measures both in kindergarten and primary schools. Examples include raising awareness and educating employees, implementing systematic registration and follow-up of school absence, and including the user perspective.

All the projects receiving funding from the 'Program for public health projects' must be evaluated, and it is necessary to establish collaboration with a

researcher in their region. In the case of VerdSett, a collaboration between Bjørnafjorden and The Regional Centre for Child and Youth Mental Health and Child Welfare, NORCE, was established during the application process. The collaboration offers many opportunities both for the municipality and researchers, but also some challenges.

How can a researcher aid the municipality in evaluating a large and complex project? How can the quality of the data be assured in a municipal setting? How can the collaboration be beneficial both for the project, the municipality, and the researcher? Experiences both from the municipality and the researcher will be presented, with focus on benefits and challenges.

Stakeholder perspectives on primary school pupils and sickness absence.

Esther Pijl, Maastricht University and GGD West-Brabant, The Netherlands, Yvonne Vanneste, GGD West-Brabant, The Netherlands, Frans Feron, Maastricht University, Jolanda Mathijssen, Tilburg University, Angelique de Rijk, Maastricht University.

Background

School absenteeism and its underlying causes can have negative effects on the cognitive, psychosocial and health development of a child. Research in primary education show high rates of sickness absence. Many stakeholders are involved in addressing school absenteeism, including primary school professionals, child and youth healthcare physicians, school attendance officers and parents. This study explores these stakeholders' perspectives, their approaches and what they envisage to be necessary in order to improve. It also aims to unveil opportunities and challenges in addressing sickness absence among primary school pupils.

Methods

Qualitative research was performed with six semi-structured focus group interviews and involving 27 participants from the West-Brabant and Amsterdam regions of the Netherlands. Thematic analysis was used.

Results

The overarching theme was aiming for the child's wellbeing. Each focus group interview started with low awareness of sickness absence as a threat to this wellbeing, but awareness grew during the interviews. The participating stakeholders regarded problematic sickness absence as complex due to a wide variety of causes, and felt that each other's expertise was necessary to reduce sickness absence. Schools registered absence, but only occasionally used planned steps; they based the identification of problematic sickness on gut feeling rather than any agreed-upon criteria.

Conclusions

To be able to systematically address sickness absence and thus improve the wellbeing of children, stakeholders felt the need for a clearly structured

approach, including monitoring of sickness absence of all pupils, identifying problematic absence and promoting collaboration with other stakeholders. An approach should allow for tailoring solutions to the individual child.

Parallel Session 8: Psychiatric Perspectives on School Attendance

Chair: Martin Knollman

Across the borders: Comparison of the prevalence and associated features of school absenteeism of Dutch and German outpatients using the SNACK.

Volker Reissner, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Düsseldorf, University of Duisburg Essen & Martin Knollman, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Essen, University of Duisburg Essen, Germany.

Although school absenteeism is known to be highly context-dependent with regard to cultural differences, national school laws, and management of absenteeism (Lyon & Cotler, 2007), studies comparing school absent youth in different countries are scarce. In a cross-national project, we assessed the prevalence of different forms of school absenteeism in outpatients of clinics for child and adolescent psychiatry in the Netherlands (Nijmegen) and Germany (Viersen, Essen) using translations of the School Nonattendance Checklist (SNACK, Heyne et al., 2019). The presentation will focus on a) the validity of the translations of the SNACK with regard to variables such as clinical diagnoses and SDQ-scales and b) the comparison of N=363 outpatients (Dutch: N= 159, German: N=203) regarding the above mentioned variables as well as different forms and the extent of school absenteeism, age, and gender. Implications regarding the usefulness of the SNACK as an economic measure for cross-cultural research into school absenteeism and possible reasons for the observed differences between the Dutch and the German sample will be discussed.

Supporting the schooling of children and adolescents in psychiatric care – perspective of students and parents.

Piia Ruutu, CRADLE, University of Helsinki.

This presentation brings to discussion key findings from dissertation Supporting the schooling of children and adolescents in psychiatric care and the perceived effects of a hospital school period (Ruutu, 2019). The purpose of the study was to identify inclusive and exclusionary practices in the Finnish school system. The study outlined the key development needs and suggested solutions to them. The data of the study was student's survey assessments from the Finnish National Hospital School Follow-Up Study 2009-2014 (n=251) and interviews of former hospital school students (n=22) and their parent's (n=17).

Presentation focuses to the themes about school attendance problems and five worrying trends identified in the study. For example, there was a strong connection between school attendance problems and alienation, social exclusion, bullying and violence in school. Another main concern was that students with disruptive behavior had a lot of interventions on their school path, but the interventions were usually unplanned and contained punitive elements, while the support and interventions of students with withdrawn behavior were minimal or absent. Also, the lack of school based early interventions was a concern.

This presentation also highlights supportive and inclusive practices in schools and gives proposals and solutions that can help to design better interventions and support for children and their families.

Rutu, P. (2019). Psykiatrisessa erikoissairaanhoidossa hoidettujen lasten ja nuorten koulunkäynnin tukeminen perusopetuksessa ja sairaalaopetuksen koetut vaikutukset. Helsinki: Helsingin yliopisto.

School attendance problems in a clinical sample of Dutch and German children and adolescents with mental disorder.

Volker Reissner Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Düsseldorf, University of Duisburg Essen, Bas deVeen, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, Radboud University Nijmegen and Karakter, The Netherlands, Martin Knollman, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Essen, University of Duisburg Essen, Germany, Alexandra Wühl, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Viersen, Germany, Ingo Spitzcok von Brisinski, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Viersen, Germany, Freia Hahn, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Viersen, Germany, Wouter Staal, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, Radboud University Nijmegen and Karakter, The Netherlands, Johannes Hebebrand, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Essen, University of Duisburg Essen, Germany.

Introduction

There is limited international data on school attendance problems amongst children and adolescents in treatment for mental disorders. We compared absenteeism in three clinical convenience samples from Nijmegen (Netherlands), Viersen and Essen (both Germany).

Method

Cross-sectional, international study design based on a uniform study protocol. We assessed the clinical diagnosis (ICD-10), the number of days absent from school during the previous four regular school weeks, type of absenteeism (SNACK), severity of psychopathology (SDQ). N=362 participants were included from out- and in-patient settings (Nijmegen: N=159, Viersen: N=102, Essen: N=101).

Results/Discussion

In the Nijmegen-sample 44.7% reported at least half a day of absence from school in contrast to 72.5% in Viersen and 94.1% in Essen during the preceding four regular school weeks. There were significant differences between the percentage of participants with school refusal, truancy, school withdrawal and exclusion between the three sites. Higher number of days absent were associated with living in Essen, higher severity of psychopathology, male gender and suffering from a mental disorder from ICD-10, chapter F2 (e.g. schizophrenia).

Despite methodological limitations (e.g. convenience sample) the study point out interesting between-sites differences warranting further investigations.

Construction and validation of the parent form of the Inventory of School Attendance Problems (ISAP).

Martin Knollman, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Essen, University of Duisburg Essen, Germany & Volker Reissner, Department of child and adolescent psychiatry, LVR-Clinic Düsseldorf, University of Duisburg Essen.

As children and adolescents' views on their problems usually are different from their parents' perspective, a multi-informant approach to the diagnostic assessment of symptoms including self-, parent- and teacher ratings is recommended. Students with problematic school absenteeism may be especially prone to diagnostic misjudgments relying only on one source of information because school absenteeism has a very heterogeneous phenomenology. To date, only the School Refusal Assessment Scale (SRAS-R; Kearney, 2002) offers both child and parent versions for the assessment of four functions of school absenteeism. The ISAP, a screening tool for the most common problems associated with school attendance problems, contains 13 scales and thus offers a more differentiated assessment (Knollmann et al., 2019). The presentation will focus on first results regarding the reliability and validity of the parent version of the ISAP. A total of N=296 completed parent versions of the ISAP were eligible for analysis. In sum, the factor structure of the child version could be confirmed, and all scales were reliable (Cronbachs Alpha>.75). The scales of the CBCL and of a German parent version of the SRAS showed the expected relations to the ISAP scales. Contrary to the child version, no significant associations with the reported extent of school absences were obtained. These results and those of a comparison of the child vs. the parent version will be discussed. Furthermore, implications for the ongoing construction and validation of a teacher version of the ISAP will be outlined.

Parallel Session 9: Intervention and Support

Chair: Irma de Wit

How to deal with sickness absence among primary school pupils? Adaptation of the MASS intervention.

Esther Pijl, Maastricht University and GGD West-Brabant, The Netherlands, Yvonne Vanneste, GGD West-Brabant, The Netherlands, Jolanda Mathijssen, Tilburg University, Frans Feron, Maastricht University, Angelique de Rijk, Maastricht University.

Background

Missing school impacts both education and health. The purpose of this study was to address sickness absence in primary schools by adjusting the 'Medical advice for sick reported students' intervention for secondary schools, accounting for differences in the children's age and the schools' organizational structure.

Methods

The intervention mapping approach steps 1 through 4 were used to adapt 'Medical advice for sick reported students' to primary schools (MASS-PS), including the creation of planning group, a literature search, stakeholder interviews and pre-testing.

Results

- (1) A logic model of the problem was created.
- (2) A logic model of change was created.
- (3) A theoretical basis and practical strategies were determined.
- (4) Practical support materials were designed. Minor changes after pre-testing the materials resulted in the MASS-PS intervention.

Conclusions

Intervention mapping was successfully used to adapt MASS to primary schools. The main changes were the lowering of the threshold for extensive sickness absence, consultations between teacher and absenteeism coordinator, and adding the social worker and remedial educationalist as experts along with the child and youth healthcare physician. MASS-PS was well-accepted by professionals. With MASS-PS, sickness absence can be addressed as a 'red flag' for underlying problems.

A Practice-based Approach toward School Dropout: Support Workers' Perspectives on Supporting Students.

Lana Van Den Berghe, Ghent University, Belgium, Sarah De Pauw, Ghent University, Belgium, Stijn Vandevelde, Ghent University, Belgium.

Dropping out from school is considered to be a cumulative process of disengagement based on a complex interplay between individual and environmental characteristics. It remains a serious concern for educational communities because it has impact on one's quality of life and is predictive of unemployment. Research has pointed towards

the need for a multi-tiered system of support to deliver a continuum of evidence-based prevention and intervention strategies. An increasing number of studies show the importance of cross-professional collaboration between all actors involved in the lives of students. The study, which will be presented during this session, was initiated on the basis of "real life" questions from daily practice on how to support students' engagement and to prevent them from dropping out. Accordingly, this study aims to contribute to the current state of knowledge from a practice-based perspective, complementing results from clinical studies. Thirty-two in-depth interviews were conducted with support workers (teachers, social workers, labour consultants, researchers, policy workers and a psychologist) in the city of Ghent in Flanders, Belgium. The results of this study uncover seven key elements with practice-oriented advice on how the support workers could implement these aspects in daily practice. Overall, the study highlights the importance of belonging and connectedness as primary key factors. In addition, this research complements the focus of current research and practice on the significance of cross-professional collaboration in supporting all students in education.

Outcome of a multi-modal CBT-based treatment program for chronic school refusal.

Johan Strömbeck, Åbo Akademi University, Finland.

School refusal (SR) can have several negative consequences, but effective treatments are available. When chronic, school absence requires comprehensive treatment. This study evaluates an intervention for SR based on a Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) model, Hemmasittarprogrammet (HSP). Attendance, anxiety, depression, quality of life, and emotional and behavioral symptoms were measured at pre-treatment, post-treatment, and follow-up. The participants (n=84; 69% male) were SR students between 10 and 17 years old and their parents. School attendance increased after treatment and at follow-up. The proportion of students totally absent from school decreased and the number of students with an acceptable level of school attendance increased. Levels of anxiety and depression were lower both post-treatment and at follow-up for the youths and their parents. HSP, a promising treatment program for school refusal, builds on the literature of CBT-based programs, which has been shown to be effective for SR treatment. However, more research about the effectiveness of the program is needed. Future studies should have a stronger research design, include a measure of fidelity, and be evaluated independent of the founders of the program under investigation.

School absenteeism in ADHD – a scoping review

Maud Palmgren, Karolinska Institutet & Stockholm Health Care Services, Sweden, Viviann Nordin, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, Anna Lidbladh, Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, Sven Bölte, Karolinska Institutet & Stockholm Health Care Services, Sweden & Curtin University, Australia, Ulf Jonsson, Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm Health Care Services, & Uppsala University, Sweden.

Background

School absenteeism is a major societal challenge, linked to a range of adverse long-term outcomes. ADHD is a common condition of childhood, associated with difficulties in school in general. To date, however, no comprehensive review of school absenteeism in ADHD is available.

Method

A scoping review of absenteeism in primary or secondary school in children with ADHD was conducted. Five databases were systematically searched from inception up to May 2021. Study selection and data extraction were performed by two independent reviewers. Meta-analyses were planned for rates of chronic absence and school dropout, while all additional results were synthesized narratively.

Results

A total of 48 eligible studies were identified. Among children and adolescents with ADHD, the presence of chronic absence ranged from 5 to 75% across studies. Population-based samples showed lower rates (5-18%) than clinical samples (12-45%), with the highest rates observed in clinical samples presenting with psychiatric comorbidities (40-75%). Due to high heterogeneity of the studies, meta-analyses were only feasible for population-based samples. Results suggested chronic absenteeism in 11% (Confidence Interval (CI): 4 to 19) of school children with ADHD, with an Odds Ratio of 2.41 (CI: 1.99 to 2.93) compared to controls. Longitudinal studies indicated that stable high symptoms trajectories and high levels of inattention in adolescence predicted absence/dropout.

Conclusions

Children with ADHD are at increased risk of school absenteeism, especially in the presence of common comorbidities. It is important to provide this population with adequate support from an early age, to prevent school absenteeism and associated adversities.

Invited Address

Chair: Malin Gren Landell

Lessons from Covid-19 for school attendance.

Kristof de Witte.

In the spring of 2020, the world experienced the largest disruption of education in history which affected 94% of the world's student population. Due to the restrictions owing to COVID-19, schools in more than 190 countries had to close for several

weeks or months in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Although the school lockdown was initially widely accepted as a necessary measure to deal with the rising pandemic, many researchers, teachers, parents and policy-makers voiced concern about the lost progress for students and the resulting educational inequality. Using the COVID-19 school closures as example, this presentation discusses the importance of school attendance and effective educational practices. It shows that absenteeism from school might be beneficial for students with specific personality traits, and detrimental for others.

Biography

Kristof De Witte is a professor in Education Economics and Political Economy at the Faculty of Economics and Business at KU Leuven, Belgium, and he holds the chair in 'Effectiveness and Efficiency of Educational Innovations' at United Nations University (UNU-MERIT) at Maastricht University, the Netherlands. Kristof De Witte is further a Fellow member of the CESifo Network, and of the Finish VATT Institute for Economic Research. At KU Leuven he is program director of the 'Master in Economic Education', and founding member and director of the research group 'Leuven Economics of Education Research'. The research interests of Kristof De Witte comprise education economics, school dropout, performance evaluation and political economy. His work touches upon multiple disciplines which is reflected in publications in the leading journals from various academic fields. De Witte is the recipient of numerous awards and honours, including the '2021 Pioneer Award' of KU Leuven, the '2020 Laureate of the Academy' award from the Royal Flemish Academy of Belgium for Science and the Arts and the '2021 CELSA Service to Society Award'. Further information: www.feb.kuleuven.be/kristof.dewitte

Keynote Address 4

David Heyne, Leiden University (The Netherlands) & INSA.

Collaboration: What we mean, why it's important, and how we're doing.

Dr David Heyne presents real-world examples along with scientific support for collaborating in the field of school attendance. Collaboration is essential between coach and client, family and school, education and mental health, research and practice, the community and her policy-makers, within countries, and across countries around the globe. The examples presented provide encouragement and inspiration for everyone invested in the education and well-being of young people.

Biography

David Heyne is co-founder of the International Network for School Attendance (INSA) and the Dutch Expertise Team for School Refusal. He obtained a post-graduate diploma in educational psychology, a master's degree in counselling psychology, and a PhD in clinical child and adolescent psychology.

He was clinical services manager for the treatment outcome program in the Centre for Developmental Psychiatry and Psychology at Monash University in Australia, and held a post as Senior Lecturer in the postgraduate child psychiatry training program at the University of Melbourne. In 2003 he joined Leiden University in the Netherlands as Associate Professor in Developmental and Educational Psychology. There he is engaged in teaching (CBT with Young People; Developmental Psychology) and research. His research addresses risk profiles for school attendance problems and the development and evaluation of assessment instruments and interventions for these problems.

Posters

Posters are available for viewing on the [Conference Website](#).

What can school give?

Pauliina Rantavuori, University of Tampere, Finland and Yrjö Engeström, CRADLE, University of Helsinki, Finland

There are at least 4000 students outside of the school in Finland. In addition, 40 % of the 8th and 9th graders in Finland do not like go to school. Adolescents in Helsinki experience anxiety, loneliness, lack of friends, depressive symptoms and school exhaustion more than before.

The aim of the study presented in this poster was to find out what do adolescent students, school staff and school partners (n = 29) talk or do not talk about school, peers, and personal involvement and what kind of ground that could give for reconstructing the concept of student engagement. This study is the first sub study of the dissertation called "The potential of the school in adolescent students' search for significance".

Our preliminary findings show that what is taught and why in schools is contained as if in a black box that seems to be impossible to touch and about what one doesn't discuss. Talk about the school doesn't focus on the core of the school; school subjects and its content. Instead of that, all three groups talk much more about peers, conflicts and bullying that happens in school. The essential point we would like to bring to discussion is how to develop teaching and learning in school that it could become meaningful for adolescent students.

The study presented in this poster is a part of the research project In Search for Significance: Fostering movement across the worlds of adolescents, funded by Academy of Finland.

Differentiating between school reluctance and refusal in school students with intellectual disability.

Adrian Waye, Deakin University, Australia, David Heyne, Leiden University, The Netherlands, Kylie M. Gray, University of Warwick, U.K., Richard P. Hasting, University of Warwick, U.K., Vaso Totsika, University College London, U.K., Bruce J. Tonge, Monash University, Australia, Glenn A. Melvin, Deakin University, Australia.

Background

School is a critical factor in the academic and social development of youth. Higher non-attendance rates have been seen in children with intellectual disabilities. Some students are reluctant to attend school and may display resistive behaviour before school. In certain instances, reluctant students will refuse to attend school and stay home, others will ultimately attend. There has been little prior focus on understanding the difference between students who are reluctant to attend but go and those who refuse school.

Objective

To identify what factors differentiate between school reluctance, school refusal and children not presenting with either, in a sample of students with an intellectual disability.

Methods

The sample included parents of students with intellectual disabilities (N = 629) who completed questionnaires assessing family demographics, school reluctance, reasons for school non-attendance, caregiver psychological distress, student anxiety and disruptive behaviour. Two multinomial logistic regression analyses were performed to identify significant differentiating variables.

Results

Female gender was shown to significantly differentiate school refusal and school reluctance. Females were significantly more likely to attend school or present with school refusal than present with school reluctance. Results indicate as disruptive behaviour levels increase, students are significantly more likely to either be reluctant to attend school or to refuse school. Further, as caregiver psychological distress increases, students are significantly more likely to exhibit school reluctance than attend school. Younger students are significantly more likely to exhibit school reluctance, than older students.

Conclusion

Study findings represent a first attempt to understand the differences between school reluctance and school refusal. Both child and parent variables were implicated. With replication, such findings may inform efforts to identify and address both school reluctance and refusal.