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The Fellow is the official peer-reviewed publication of the Ph. D. students at the School of Social Policy & Practice at the University of Pennsylvania

DSSC Report

Flowers are blooming and allergies are attacking. Winter is gone and Spring is in the air. And just as seasons come and go, the PhD program is experiencing its own comings and goings.

First of all, the DSSC wants to thank everyone who helped with our Valentines toiletry drive for the Camden women's shelter. Several people put in a lot of effort and they really made the world a little bit better. We also want to thank prof. Sorenson, Shara, and everyone else who helped put together the media advocacy training many of us attended this semester. The training was excellent and valuable. Hopefully we will all get several opportunities to practice what we have learned over the course of our careers.

While this probably isn't the first you've heard of this news, several of our illustrious colleagues are graduating (or have already graduated). They will be sorely missed for their contributions to our student community. They will also be envied because, they are finally done with their PhDs. Congratulations Charlene, Tom, Heather, Robin, Joanna, and Sara! These last two ladies deserve an extra honorable mention, having both been awarded prestigious awards for their dissertation work... See Peer Cites on the back cover for more details!

An old curriculum has also gone this past semester. For all of the incoming students and those of us who haven't defended our dissertation proposals yet, there were changes to the curriculum that will be implemented this upcoming semester. The SP2 website has details and so does an e-mail prof. Sorenson sent around. If you have any questions or concerns about the curriculum changes, let the DSSC know and we can bring them up with the school.

In addition to the new curriculum, other changes are occurring. First, we want to welcome the new students coming into the PhD program. We have seven new students in this upcoming cohort: Sambuddha, Eunhae (Grace), Ryan, Angelina, Alexandra, Jeffrey & Daniel. Welcome to SP2!

We also want to let you know that, with a little bit of pushing from outgoing Fellow editor-in-chief Maayan Schori and the DSSC, reimbursement for teaching courses for PhD students has been increased. Thank you Maayan for bringing the issue up, and thanks to everyone who helped make this change possible. Hopefully this will result in a little bit more money in the pockets of some hard-working PhD student instructors... The DSSC also wants to wish Megan, Chenyi, Jia, Dexia, Micheal, Marlene, and Daniel good luck on their preliminary exams this summer!

Finally, a personal note. I just wanted to thank everyone who has cut me (Daniel) a little extra slack this semester. As many of you know, my wife and I recently welcomed a new baby girl into our home and consequently have been a little busier and getting a little less sleep than normal. In addition to several notes and comments of congratulations, several of you have gone out of your way to help me and my family during this happy transition. Thank you, your help is very much appreciated by my whole family.

Marlene Walk and Daniel Curtis
DSSC Co-Chairs

PEER REVIEW

We all work hard writing papers for classes, and many papers are worthy of more than just a letter grade. The Fellow provides an outlet to share unpublished manuscripts, essays, book reviews and editorials with colleagues in an effort to distribute ideas, spark debates, obtain feedback, encourage journal submissions, and support interdisciplinary collaborations. Full references are available upon request to the authors.

Risk-taking & self-regulation: A systematic review of the analysis of delinquency outcomes in the juvenile justice intervention literature 1996-2009

by Michelle Evans-Chase, Minseop Kim & Mary Zhou | meva@sp2.upenn.edu

Background: Juvenile justice system involvement provides jurisdictions with the opportunity to intervene in the lives of youth involved in delinquent behavior. While there are certainly societal and community level factors that interact with individual level factors to increase the likelihood of delinquency, taking advantage of opportunities to address individual behavior with effective juvenile justice programming is one operative approach to reducing delinquent behavior until those societal and community level factors can also be addressed. Unfortunately, the most comprehensive meta-analysis to date of facility-based interventions in the juvenile justice system found effect sizes ranging from -0.11 for shock incarceration to $+0.11$ for intensive aftercare. While there are undoubtedly multiple reasons for these small effect sizes, one cause may be found in the analysis of intervention effects, rather than in the interventions themselves.

Previous delinquency research has shown a consistent relationship between age and delinquency, whereby delinquency increases sharply from about age 10 through age 16, after which it decreases sharply into late adolescence. Previous neuroscience research has identified two predictable neuropsychosocial processes that may underlie this relationship. The first process is a neurologically determined spike in reward seeking that often expresses itself in an increase in risk-taking behavior that begins in early adolescence, peaks in middle adolescence, and decreases rapidly through late adolescence. The second process is the slow development of self-regulatory areas in the brain, which continue to mature through adolescence into the early 20s. Assuming that risk-taking and self-regulation both play a part in delinquent behavior, the relationship between age (as a proxy for these neuropsychosocial processes) and delinquency should be an important relationship to consider when measuring delinquency outcomes.

Methods: To explore the degree to which age effects have been taken into consideration in the analysis of delinquency outcomes, a systematic review of the juvenile justice intervention literature was conducted. One hundred and seventeen content relevant studies were identified and data on the methods by which age was included in the analysis of delinquency outcomes was collected. Variables included the use (yes or no) of an analytical method that could test for a curvilinear relationship between age and delinquency, and/or a moderating effect of age on the relationship between intervention effects and delinquency.

Articles were identified as having correctly tested for a curvilinear relationship between age and delinquency if a quadratic equation in polynomial regression ($Y=a+b1*TREATMENT+b2*AGE+b3*AGE^2+\epsilon$) was used in analysis. This method of analysis would be particularly important in

samples with age ranges that included both those who are in early adolescence and thus experiencing a normative increase in risk taking/delinquency and those in later adolescence who are experiencing a normative decrease in risk taking/delinquency. This method not only correctly models curvilinear relationships between age and delinquency outcomes, but also helps to avoid or reduce bias on the coefficient of TREATMENT, which might be produced by misspecification of the age variable.

Articles were identified as having correctly tested for potential moderating effects in analysis that used: 1) an interaction term in regression ($Y=a+b1*TREATMENT+b2*AGE+b3*AGE*TREATMENT+\epsilon$), or 2) an interaction term in ANOVA (TREATMENT \times AGE). This type of analysis is important given that neurological processes involved in self-regulation have been found to develop on a predictable timeline, increasing through late adolescence into early adulthood. Associated with this maturation is the ability of youth to delay gratification, consider the consequences of their actions, better control their emotions and thus refrain from associated delinquent behavior.

Finally, articles that used multiple group analysis were also identified as having correctly tested for moderating effects, given that it is designed to test whether values of model parameters vary across groups. Additionally, because multiple group analysis does not assume linear relationships among variables across groups, these articles were also coded as having accounted for the curvilinear relationship between age and delinquency outcomes.

Results: Ninety-one percent of the 117 articles included in the review addressed neither the curvilinear nor the moderating effects of age on delinquency outcomes. Of the ten articles that used at least one of the operationally defined methods of addressing possible age effects in analysis, 80% had findings consistent with existing neuropsychosocial evidence of age effects on delinquency.

Implications: Consideration of age (as a proxy for neuropsychosocial development) in the evaluation of juvenile justice interventions is an underutilized method of increasing the knowledge base of what works with adolescents involved in the juvenile justice system. By examining the impact of age using multiple groups in analysis researchers could 1) compare delinquency outcomes across treatment/control groups within each age group, which would control for the curvilinear impact of age on delinquency; and 2) compare intervention effects across age groups, which would indicate whether intervention effects on delinquency outcomes are conditional based on age. Adopting this type of analysis may provide a more precise measure of intervention effects and better information about which interventions work for which age group(s) of adolescents.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Julie Cederbaum, Ph. D.

Assistant Professor, School of Social Work, University of Southern California

Tell us about your work and how it relates to your research at Penn.

My current work is built from my clinical experience prior to entering the PhD program at Penn and the primary data collection experience I had while I was at Penn. I have continued to frame my work around family, focusing on how intra-familial and other interpersonal relationships influence mental and physical health. Much of this work includes using dyadic data to explore these issues. While at Penn I was more narrow, focusing specifically on how parent-child sexual risk communication and parental monitoring influenced sexual risk and substance use behaviors of youth. I have expanded this by framing vulnerable families more broadly (including those with HIV, but also pregnancy and parenting young women, military connected families, and substance use and parenting), extending risk to look at factors beyond HIV risk as outcomes (e. g. mental health), and moving to look beyond family processes at family relationships and the influence of roles, communication styles, and availability/presence.

What experiences at Penn have been the most valuable for you - as a student and now in your job at USC Social Work?

I am really glad that I took part in a number of research projects. Having the opportunity to work on active projects, including qualitative interviews and focus groups, as well as intervention trials and survey research really taught me about project oversight and management, the good and the difficult. Being supported to complete a primary data collection dissertation project taught me the challenges of such work. I am glad that I had that experience while still in the safety of the student role. This would include the IRB process, recruitment, carrying out the project, data entry, management, and cleaning, as well as analysis. Many of these experiences were outside of SP2. The strength of learning from within and outside the school was the interdisciplinary approach, strength of various styles and skills, and interconnectivity with colleagues throughout the university.

What has been your biggest challenge as you have transitioned from being a graduate student to a faculty member at USC?

While probably not unique to me, I think the biggest challenge at the beginning was just feeling like an imposture. I actually remember feeling this way at the beginning of the doctoral program as well. While a bit of that likely never goes away completely, I think the next biggest challenge has been learning how to build my profile, allowing folks to understand who I am as a social worker and a researcher. I am still excited about a lot of different projects but now spend more time really thinking about what makes sense for the career I am building. Last, there is always the work/life balance. Being a junior faculty and having kids takes some juggling. I have committed to working hard during the day when I am in the office and not working nights and weekends. I am still working on feel "Zen" about this choice but know that it best matches the priorities in my life.



Why did you choose to go straight into a faculty position? Why not take a post-doc first?

This is a great question. I think that so much about the choice of a post-doc versus a faculty position should be based on what you need to accomplish post-graduation. I was lucky to work in an active NIH funded center while at Penn. This gave me a lot of opportunity to publish and grant write. Because of this, I felt that my resume and skills were solid enough to go straight into a faculty position. I also knew I had some projects that would be ready to submit during this first year (carry over projects from my collaborations at Penn)

which boosted my confidence to take a faculty position. Last, I was offered a faculty position fairly early on in my hometown. I do think that I would have pursued post-docs if I did not feel like I was making a mark on the job market. The negative of this choice is your tenure clock begins immediately. Ultimately, the post-doc matters most if you are interested in a working at research institution where tenure is becoming more and more elusive.

Do you have any advice for current SP2 PhD students vis-à-vis the job market and their career prospects and options?

My best advice while at Penn is to take your time. The more grants (big or small), publications, and presentations you do while you are in the PhD program, the stronger you will be on the job market. My best advice for the job market is to use your networks. Anyone you know, who knows someone who knows you, etc. The personal connections, even weak ties, are really invaluable on the job market. With so many applications coming into schools, having someone who can speak about your capabilities and work is important. Look to see who might be alumni from your Penn and reach out to them. Find out what the school is really looking for (the announcements can be very cryptic) to help you figure out how to best market yourself for that school. You can also ask about climate, collegiality, support, etc. Sometimes the best school "on paper" is not the best school for you. Do your best to get all the information you can so that you can figure out if the school is a "best fit" for you.

Is there anything else you think current Ph. D. students should know?

Enjoy your time at Penn. Do your best to build relationships with folks across the university. Make the most of opportunities, even those that might seem random or not the "best" value (if you are doing a cost/benefit analysis); its sometimes those that prove to be the most invaluable in the future. Take the time to know your classmate as they will remain your colleagues (albeit all across the country) for the rest of your career. Keep talking about what you do. The more you talk about it, the better you will be at marketing yourself to prospective employers and future colleagues. Last, connect with alumni! Use your Penn SP2 network to look at your CV, cover letters, etc. Many likely serve on search committees and can guide you in helping to ensure that you stand out on the market.

Publications

Evans-Chase, M. & Zhou, H. (forthcoming). A systematic review of the juvenile justice intervention literature: What it can (and cannot) tell us about what works with delinquent youth. *Crime & Delinquency*.

Graham, J. R., **Shier, M. L.**, & Brownlee, K. (2012). Contexts of practice and their impact on social work: A comparative analysis of the context of geography and culture. *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity in Social Work, 21(2)*.

Greenspan, I., Handy, F., & Katz-Gerro, T. (forthcoming). Environmental philanthropy: Is it similar to other types of environmental behavior? *Organization & Environment*.

Jones, M. E., **Shier, M. L.**, & Graham, J. R. (2012). Aspects of intimate relationships that can impact stable housing: Insight from a homeless sub-population in a large Canadian city. *Journal of Social Policy, 41(1)*, 101-117.

Shier, M. L., Jones, M. E., & Graham, J. R. (2012). Employment difficulties experienced by employed homeless people: Labour market factors that contribute to and maintain homelessness. *Journal of Poverty, 16(1)*, 27-47.

Walk, M., Handy, F., & Schinnenburg, H. (2012): Expectations and experiences of young employees: The case of German nonprofits. *Administration in Social Work*. DOI: 10.1080/03643107.2012.667658.

Zhou, H., & **Evans-Chase, M.** (2011). Best practices in juvenile correctional and treatment services: A systematic review. Centerville, UT: The Association of Private Correctional and Treatment Organizations (APCTO).

Presentations

Evans-Chase, M. & Kim, M. (2011, October). Neuropsychosocial development and delinquency: Are we paying enough attention to the relationships among age, self-regulation & intervention outcomes? Poster presented at the 2011 Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Conference for Children's Justice and Safety, National Harbor, MD.

Awards/Funding/Jobs

Joanna Bisgaier received the 2012 Student Research Award for Social Work Research from GADE (Group for the Advancement of Doctoral Education). Shown on the photo from right to left are Jill Duerr Berrick, awards committee chair; Joanna Bisgaier; Karin Rhodes, Joanna's dissertation chair; and Kia Bentley, Chair Elect of GADE. Joanna graduated in 2011.



Michelle Evans-Chase received an American Samoa Community Services Grant from the Government of American Samoa for the Toa a le Tai (Ocean Heroes) Youth Mentoring Program; total: \$94,000

Michelle Evans-Chase received a grant from the Ernest F. Hollings Ocean Awareness Trust Fund for the project: "2 Samoas/1 Ocean: Marine safety and conservation clinics and educational outreach program"; total: \$20,000.

Sara Wiesel-Cullen received an honorable mention for the best dissertation from the Society for Social Work Research. Her dissertation chair was Professor Phyllis Solomon. Photographed with her award. Sara graduated in 2011.



Note from the outgoing editor

Since my first year at SP2 I have been on the board of the Fellow, and in the last three years I served as editor. I had an amazing experience being the editor, and I would gladly continue in this role, yet graduating from the program soon seems like the better plan for my longer-term goals. . . I am leaving the Fellow in Megan Stanton's very capable hands, and wish you all the best of luck with your studies and future plans.

Maayan Lawental Schori
Outgoing editor of the Fellow