Risk and protective factors influencing educational success and suicidality for First Nations youth-in-care in Ontario, Canada

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Outline

- Contextual Background
- Ontario Looking After Children Project
- Sample & Measures
- Results
- Conclusion
- Q & A
Ontario
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>505,990 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>244,820 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>91,568 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>44,493 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>30,510 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malta</td>
<td>316 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+</td>
<td>44 km²</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ontario</strong></td>
<td><strong>917,741 km²</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indigenous Peoples in Canada: A (Very) Brief Summary

- Colonialism
  - Changing relationships
- Assimilation
  - Residential schools
- Ongoing effects
  - Intergenerational trauma
  - Overrepresentation of indigenous (First Nations, Métis, and Inuit) children in care
Literature Review

- Education gap
- Culturally-relevant education
- Cherubini, Hodson, Manley-Casimir, & Muir, 2010; Gallagher-Mackay, Kiddler, & Methot, 2013, Ryan & Whitman, 2013

- Cultural autonomy as a protective factor re: suicidality/self-harm
- Chandler & Lalonde, 1998; Kirmayer et al., 2007
Ontario Looking After Children (OnLAC)

- Uses Second Canadian Adaptation of Assessment and Action Record (AAR-C2)
  - Seven developmental dimensions:
    1. Health
    2. Education
    3. Identity
    4. Family & Social Relationships
    5. Social Presentation
    6. Emotional & Behavioural Development
    7. Self-Care (& Transitions to Adulthood)
    + Developmental Assets

- Mandated in Ontario to assess service needs and developmental outcomes of young people in care
- Sixteenth year of data collection (2001-present)
Purpose of the current exploratory study

1. To develop a plausible model for educational outcomes to describe risk and protective factors for First Nations youth in out-of-home care in Ontario

2. To develop a plausible model of suicidality/self-harm to describe risk and protective factors for First Nations youth in out-of-home care in Ontario
Sample

- Cross-sectional sample OnLAC Years 10-14
- $N = 1,877$ First Nations youth
- Age 12-17 years
- 50.3% male, 49.7% female
- Placement settings
  - Foster home: 61%
  - Group home: 19%
  - Kinship care: 7%
  - Independent living: 6%
  - Customary care: 2%
  - Other placement setting: 5%
EDUCATION Dependent variable

*Educational Success (α = .80)*

- Multi-informant measure of positive educational outcomes developed by Tessier & Flynn (2015)
  - Child welfare worker
    - Educational performance matches ability
    - Acquisition of skills
  - Caregiver
    - Educational level compared to age peers
    - Performance in reading and other language arts, mathematics, and overall
  - Youth
    - Rating of school performance
EDUCATION Independent variables (from the AAR-C2-2010)

- Age
- Gender
- Family-based care vs. group care
- Soft drug use (youth-reported)
- Neglect
- Total Difficulties (Goodman’s SDQ; caregiver-reported)
- Learning-related difficulties (caregiver-reported)
- Stress Symptoms (youth-reported)
- Cultural Assets (youth-reported)
- Developmental Assets (Search Institute; caregiver-reported)
- Positive Life Experiences (youth-reported)
EDUCATION Results
(Multiple Regression)

- Statistically significant model
  \( F(11, 531) = 215.13, p < .001 \)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Standardized Beta</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 = Female; 0 = Male)</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>1.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (in years)</td>
<td>-.69&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neglect (1 = Yes; 0 = No)</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>-.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning-related difficulties (1 = Yes; 0 = No)</td>
<td>-2.62&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-3.40&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Difficulties</td>
<td>-.33&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.12&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft drug use</td>
<td>-1.03&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>-.47&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress symptoms</td>
<td>.27</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural assets</td>
<td>-1.70</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-3.96&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental Assets</td>
<td>-1.70</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-3.96&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive life experiences</td>
<td>.37&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Care (1 = Family-based; 0 = Group)</td>
<td>-.99</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>( \bar{R}^2 )</td>
<td>.01&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.18&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.33&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: <sup>a</sup> p < .05 (2-tailed); <sup>b</sup> p < .01 (2-tailed); <sup>c</sup> p < .001 (2-tailed)
SUICIDALITY/SELF-HARM Dependent variable

- Constructed dichotomous variable based on youth-reported experiences of suicidality/self-harm in past 12 months
  - ‘Yes’ to one or more of the following:
    - Attempt to harm oneself
    - Seriously contemplated suicide
    - Suicide attempt
SUICIDALITY/SELF-HARM Independent variables (from the AAR-C2-2010)

- Age
- Gender
- Family-based care vs. group care
- Soft drug use (youth-reported)
- Stress Symptoms (youth-reported)
- Years involved with the child welfare system
- Positive Mental Health (Keyes; youth-reported)
- Cultural assets (youth-reported)
- Educational Success (Tessier & Flynn; youth-reported)
- General Self-Esteem (youth-reported)
- Hope (youth-reported)
## SUICIDALITY/SELF-HARM Results
(Logistic Regression)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predictors</th>
<th>Model 1</th>
<th>Model 2</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Odds Ratio</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender (1 = Female; 0 = Male)</td>
<td>.99&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2.71</td>
<td>.80&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age (in years)</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>-.22&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soft drug use</td>
<td>.16&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>.12&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress symptoms</td>
<td>.56&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1.75</td>
<td>.46&lt;sup&gt;c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years involved in child welfare</td>
<td>-.04&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>-.04</td>
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<tr>
<td>Positive Mental Health</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.02&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural assets</td>
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<td>Educational success</td>
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<td>Self-Esteem</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hope</td>
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<tr>
<td>Care (1 = Family-based; 0 = Group)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.53&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nagelkerke R Square</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td></td>
<td>.19</td>
</tr>
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\[
\chi^2(2) = 31.0, \ p < .001 \quad \chi^2(5) = 81.0, \ p < .001 \quad \chi^2(11) = 100.3, \ p < .001
\]

**Notes:**<sup>a</sup> p < .05 (2-tailed); <sup>b</sup> p < .01 (2-tailed); <sup>c</sup> p < .001 (2-tailed)
Summary of Results

EDUCATION

• Protective factors
  – More Developmental Assets
  – More Positive Life Experiences

• Risk factors
  – Learning-related difficulties
  – Greater Total Difficulties
  – Soft drug use
  – Greater Cultural Assets

SUICIDALITY/SELF-HARM

• Protective factors
  – Being male
  – Being older
  – Greater Positive Mental Health
  – Being in family-based care

• Risk factors
  – Soft drug use
  – More Stress Symptoms
Conclusion

• Models are a starting-point for influencing outcomes for education and suicidality/self-harm for First Nations youth-in-care

• Further testing/validation of models is necessary

• Limitations of the current studies’ sample
Conclusion

- Promoting protective factors might help to mitigate risk factors
- Education – culturally relevant education
- Suicidality/self-harm – family-based care
Acknowledgements

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Questions or comments?

Thank you!

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