
EDITORIAL STATEMENT

NIMH Consortium of Editors on Development and Psychopathology

Over the last 2 years members of the NIMH Editors' Consortium on Development and Psychopathology have engaged in consultation with leading scholars concerning the status of research on childhood mental health and illness. As a result of this ongoing dialogue, we have concluded that there now exists a critical opportunity to increase the practical yield and tangible impact of research on the causes and consequences of child psychopathology. We believe that traditional, variable-oriented, sample-based research strategies and data analytic techniques alone cannot reveal the complex causal processes that likely give rise to normal and abnormal behavior among different children and adolescents. To a large extent, the predominant methods of our social and psychological sciences have valued quantitative approaches over all others, to the exclusion of methods which might clarify the ecological context of behavioral and social phenomena.

Qualitative methods have not traditionally been reflected in the manner in which the science is carried out and in what has generally been deemed acceptable for journal publication. These research methods (e.g., rigorous qualitative and ethnographic approaches, in-depth single case studies, etc.) have not been institutionally legitimized, and most incentives (e.g., grant awards, promotion, career advancement, and academic prestige) appear yoked to hypothesis-testing rather than hypothesis-generating (descriptive) research. Coupled with logistic constraints on journal space, these problems result in fragmentation of our research knowledge, lack of synthetic understanding, and limited theoretical progress. As a whole, journals and academic committees have valued data-based (i.e., quantitative) publications over more theoretical or integrative work, or both, such as critical reviews, conceptual contributions, and analytic inquiries at the individual case level. However, such articles often lead to new scientific understanding and critical advances, and are among the most widely cited, based on standard citation indexes.

We have concluded that as editors we have a responsibility to encourage a greater investment in the development and use of diverse and multiple methods. In order to bridge the gap between descriptive knowledge and causal understanding of normal and abnor-

mal development and behavior in their ecological context, we encourage submissions that utilize varied research strategies. Integrative, critical reviews and theoretical pieces are also encouraged. Exceptional and novel contributions of this nature will be given priority, both in terms of time to publication as well as journal space.

NIMH Editors Consortium on Development and Psychopathology Consortium Members¹

American Journal of Community Psychology

American Journal of Mental Retardation

Applied Developmental Science

Child Abuse and Neglect

Child Development

Clinical Psychology: Science and Practice

Current Directions in Psychological Science

Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics

European Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

Family Process

Infant Behavior & Development

International Journal of Behavioral Development

Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology

Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Journal of Child and Adolescent Psychopharmacology

Journal of Child Neurology

Journal of Child Psychology & Psychiatry

Journal of Community Psychology

Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology

Journal of Research on Adolescence

Journal of Marital and Family Therapy

Journal of Family Psychology

Psychiatry: The Study of Interpersonal Processes
Science

¹ All of the journals listed have been involved in the conceptualization, drafting, and/or final endorsement of this editorial statement as Consortium members. However, the listing here does not indicate that all journals' editorial policies will change. Change in editorial policies will be reflected by publication of the statement in specific journals.