

Special Issue

Protective and Risk Factors for the Mental Health of Children and Adolescents: Prevention and Treatment of Mental Disorders, and Promotion of Well-Being

Message from the Guest Editors

Epidemiological studies have shown that the onset of the first mental disorder occurs before the age of 14 in one-third of individuals. Anxiety disorders are the most common condition in children, followed by behavioural disorders, mood disorders and substance use disorders. All mental health problems in childhood and adolescence are linked to relevant personal, familiar, social and economic costs across an individuals' lifespan, and have adverse consequences on future emotional and social development. According to the World Health Organization, mental disorders are the leading cause of health-related disability in children and adolescents worldwide. Mental health problems are also associated with poorer academic performance, even to the point of dropping out of school, and an increased risk of suicide. For these reasons, it is important to detect not only those risk factors that are relevant to understanding the development of mental health problems in children and adolescents, but also protective factors that can help inform programs aimed at preventing psychological distress and promoting well-being.

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