Author's response to reviews

Title: Profiles of Family-focussed Adverse Experiences through Childhood and Early Adolescence: The ROOTS Project, a community investigation of adolescent mental health

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Dear Editors

Re: Profiles of Family-focussed Adverse Experiences Through Childhood and Early Adolescence: The ROOTS Project a community investigation of adolescent mental health

I attach this research article for your consideration.

This is the first study to combine comprehensive semi-structured interviewing of family adversities in the childhood years with the use of a timeline methodology and using a latent class analytic technique to estimate longitudinal exposure to life events and difficulties through the first 15 years of life. The findings demonstrate key features for future research aimed at understanding the role of early adverse experiences in mental illnesses:

i) Individuals can be classed into groups based on the nature of their experiences over time.
ii) We have identified a novel class distinguished by atypical parenting by both parents. This is distinct from other severity classes with a distinct association with self harm in adolescents.
iii) There is marked stability in the type of exposure from early childhood through to early adolescence
iv) Sex differences (F>) in psychopathology are seen only in those individuals exposed to low levels of adversity.

This procedure of combining detailed interviews with timelines within an LCA analysis uniquely shows differential pattern of risk exposure not previously revealed.

We hope that BMC psychiatry will consider publication this work.

We look forward to hearing from you.
Yours sincerely

Valerie Dunn, Research Associate/ROOTS Project Coordinator