Reviewer’s report

Title: Family dissolution and children’s social well-being at school: A historic cohort study

Version: 0 Date: 02 Aug 2019

Reviewer: Laura Di Manno

Reviewer's report:

Abstract
Consider rephrasing the term "family split-up" to another more commonly used term such as parental separation, parental divorce, or family dissolution in order to match the current literature.

Please use a capital W when referring to Western countries
It could be worthwhile defining social well-being
Results section, please refer to the comparison group (i.e. those from intact families) in the following statement: "Among the 31% who lived in split-up families, we found more children with a low level of social well-being at school (adjusted OR 1.41, 95% CI 1.36;1.47)…"
In your conclusion you have provided a brief summary. A note regarding potential implications would also be useful to include here. This is in line with journal guidelines.

Background

In paragraph 1 you refer to psychological adjustment and social adjustment. Are these constructs distinct from psychosocial well-being, also mentioned in the same sentence?
The reference to inter-parental conflict and the sentence, "Conflict levels between parents before, during, and after the parental divorce may explain more about children's adaptation to parental separation than the actual event of divorce." Seems to come out of the blue and does not appear to be written in context with the rest of the paragraph. A separate paragraph could be written about conflict if this is an important point in your intro.

Please provide further support for your hypothesis: "From this perspective, it has been hypothesized that children have a higher level of social well-being if divorce occurs when they are older rather than younger because a considerable part of the socialization process takes place early in the child's life [10]."

Please provide further support for your study's focus on social wellbeing. I agree that this is an important outcome to examine, however the background section of the paper does not highlight its importance in enough depth. For instance, some of the questions that could be answered in the background include: Does low social wellbeing impact student's academic achievement? Does it make a young person more at risk for developing mental illnesses? Does a young person from a dissolved family cope better with the divorce/separation if they have strong peer relations and aren't being bullied?
Methods

Please correct grammatical errors in the following sentence: "All children fill in the questionnaire electronically with a personal log-in during a school hours alongside with their classmates and with a teacher present."

It is apparent that the measure of "family split-up" does not necessarily refer to parental separation or divorce. Therefore, the background section could benefit from some rationale around examining families that have not necessarily gone through a separation or divorce, but where parents are living apart for other reasons. You refer to the limitation of other studies ".only include data on families legally split-up by divorce or separation" but do not provide a rationale for including data where families are dissolved for reasons not due to divorce or separation.

Social well-being variable: can you include any information in your methods regarding this measure's psychometric properties?

More detail re the step-parent variable and number of family structure changes variables would be helpful. I.e. what items were asked in the questionnaire? If no direct item, how are these variables derived from other info collected by the questionnaire?

Discussion

Please provide explanation re the following statement "Stratification by age revealed that children between 9-12 years had significantly but not conceptually higher odds…"

Review grammar throughout the manuscript e.g. "has already have taken place" "has it origin" "with full set of variables".

You state, "Teachers and parents might not be suitable to report children's perspective since they only have a partial picture of the child." Please provide a clear argument re what teachers and parents may not be able to report on or how their reports are "partial".

What does, "due to a higher validity of answers…" mean? Does this need to be re-phrased?

In the discussion, you state that the excluded children who lost a parent (to what? Death?) and children placed in care, maintained the focus of the study on the influence of family split-up. Any and all exclusion criteria should be explained in the methods section.

"a considerable number of parents in Denmark separate when the children are 1-2 years old" - please provide the statistics that support this statement.

Please explain this statement: "However, since the possible misclassification most likely did not depend on exposure it would be non-differential."
How many participants were excluded from analysis for the following reason? "If another way of avoiding answering was to use the option "I don't want to answer", this would increase the likelihood of being excluded." Any and all exclusion criteria should be explained in the methods section.

If the data were not collected for research purposes, how did the parents' consent to their children's data being used for this study?

**Are the methods appropriate and well described?**
If not, please specify what is required in your comments to the authors.

No

**Does the work include the necessary controls?**
If not, please specify which controls are required in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are the conclusions drawn adequately supported by the data shown?**
If not, please explain in your comments to the authors.

Yes

**Are you able to assess any statistics in the manuscript or would you recommend an additional statistical review?**
If an additional statistical review is recommended, please specify what aspects require further assessment in your comments to the editors.

I am able to assess the statistics

**Quality of written English**
Please indicate the quality of language in the manuscript:

Needs some language corrections before being published
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