Reviewer’s report

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

Version: 1 Date: 22 Sep 2019

Reviewer: Laura Di Manno

Reviewer's report:

Thank you for taking into consideration the comments from the initial review process. After reading your revised manuscript, I would like to note that it is much improved. There are still some comments I have regarding some sections. I believe that making some additional changes would further strengthen the paper.

Abstract:

Your statement "The school may be an important setting for identifying and providing help and support in children experiencing family dissolution." Is a good addition to the abstract.

Background:

You stated in your response to reviewer comments that 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." has been rephrased, however, you have simply started the sentence with the word "indeed". Given that the reference to interparental conflict is in the very 1st paragraph of the paper, it would ideally not be presented as a brief addition to the points made about separation/divorce and school-related outcomes for children.

You have added some references to support the 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 [6, 9, 10]." A couple of sentences describing the literature regarding the age at which children reach key social milestones would add weight to your arguments.

You stated in your response to reviewer comments that you added two sentences about the relationship between well-being and academic performance and mental health later in life. In fact, you added one sentence that reads, "Poor social well-being has been associated with lower academic performance in school and higher risk of severe mental health problems." Some further description of the literature would be useful here. Have you cited cross-sectional or longitudinal studies? Age of participants? N of samples?
Methods:

You state that you assume there is only a minor part of your population where families are living apart for reasons other than separation or divorce. Are you able to include some statistics or references to support this assumption?

Can you include the reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of the social-wellbeing scale?

You have clarified that the information regarding step-parents and changes in family structure were gleaned from the available registry data. The way that participants were categorised as having a step-parent/no step-parent is clear. However, can you please explain how the number of changes in the family structure was defined as either "1", "2" and "&gt;2". Did participants report how many family structure changes had occurred over a certain time period? Or are these numbers based on derived from other information available in the registry data?

Discussion:

Some discussion regarding the implications of your findings would be useful. For instance, if the school is an important setting for identifying and providing help and support in children experiencing family dissolution, what does this mean for teachers? What can they look for? How can they follow up appropriately to support children impacted by family dissolution? What supports can schools put in place? i.e. staff trained in student wellbeing, referral pathways?

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

Yes

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.

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