From birth to young adulthood: What are the consequences for a woman in her forties?

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Subjective well-being over the life course: evidence and policy implications
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Background

“A prerequisite for any policy which aims to maximise well-being is a model of the life-course that captures in a quantitative way the relative impact of all the main influences upon subsequent well-being. Separate studies of the effect of one variable at a time are of little use in thinking about resource allocation, as the size of the different effects has to be compared.

The need here is not unlike the need of macroeconomic policy for a working model of the economy. So it is not surprising that the OECD, having developed an international standard for the measurement of well-being (OECD, 2013) is calling for much more research to model what determines it.”

(Layard et al. 2014)
AIM

To estimate Layard et al. 2014’s model using Swedish data and answer the following:

(i) How important are the different adult outcomes (economic, social and personal) for well-being?

(ii) What is the role of child development, family background and birth characteristics on adult life-satisfaction: both direct and via adult outcomes?

(iii) How far can we predict adult life-satisfaction at different earlier points in a person’s life? In other words, does the child “reveal” the adult? Or can we all be remade in adulthood?
The Swedish Individual Development and Adaptation (IDA)’s database

- Over 500 women born in Sweden, who at the time of the *first* data collection in **1965** were in the third grade and were approximately 10 years old are followed during different points in time during their childhood and adulthood, being *asked* almost the same questions, but also gender-related questions.

- Data collected from intensive psychological and medical investigation including a routine medical check-up during school years and beyond.
  
  ➢ data on *stress hormones*.

- Data from *official registers* including obstetric records, information on criminal offences, mental health, employment, education, alcohol abuse, etc.
Using IDA database

• Explain (using GLS) average adult life-satisfaction (1-6) during the forties: “How happy, satisfied or content with your life were you during the last 12 months/year?”

• We explain life-satisfaction by adult outcome variables (AO), childhood characteristics (CO), and birth characteristics (BO).
Adult outcomes (AO) & adult life-satisfaction

- Good conduct (85)
- Menopause
- Sick-leave spells (04)
- Burnout (04)***
- Self-assessed health (04)***
- Number of children (04)
- Married/cohabitated (04)***
- Worked (04)*
- Highest educ, achievement (98)*
- Household’s income (1000 SEK) (98)

AO (when CO & BO included) vs AO only
Child outcomes (CO) & adult life-satisfaction

- Distraction score***
- DBA teachers’ tests (3 6)*
- Intelligence tests (3 6)
- School grades (3 6 8)**
- Mother worked**
- Single child when in gr, 3
- Family’s income
- Father’s years of education
- Mother’s years of education

CO (when AO & BO included)  CO only
Birth outcomes (BO) & adult life-satisfaction

- Neonatal problem
- Birth BMI
- Birth weight (100 g)
- Labor in hours
- Pregnancy weeks
- Number of diagnoses (mother)***
- Earlier sickness
- Pregnancy number
- Mother’s age

- BO (when AO & CO included)
- BO only

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Stress hormone cortisol & adult life-satisfaction
Stress hormone & adult life-satisfaction

Adult outcomes

- Menopause
- Sick-leave spells
- Burnout***
- Self-assessed health***
- Number of children
- Married/cohabitated***
- Work**
- Highest educ. achievement *
- Household’s income

GLS equation
Cortisol equation
Stress hormone & adult life-satisfaction

Child & Family Characteristics

- Concentration difficulties
- DBA teachers’ tests (3 6)
- Intelligence tests (3 6)
- School grades (3 6 8)
- Mother worked
- Single child in grade 3
- Family’s income
- Father’s years of education
- Mother’s years of education

GLS equation
Cortisol equation
Stress hormone & adult life-satisfaction

Pregnancy & birth outcomes

- Neonatal problem**
- Birth BMI
- Birth weight (100 g)
- labor in hours
- Pregnancy weeks
- Number diag. (mother)**
- Earlier sickness
- Pregnancy number
- Mother’s age*

GLS equation
Cortisol equation
OUR RESULTS
answer to our questions

(i) How important are the different adult outcomes (economic, social and personal) for well-being?

Self-assessed health, burnout and sick-leave are the most important

(ii) What is the role of child & family background and birth characteristics on adult life-satisfaction: both direct and via adult outcomes?

Child’s emotional status & Mother’s characteristics during pregnancy and during school years

(iii) How far can we predict adult life-satisfaction at different earlier points in a person’s life?

The analysis of the stress hormone suggests that more work should be done before answering this question.
Thank you for your attention