

Dissolution Pathways and Mother-Child Relationship Quality Among Adolescents

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Background

- Children in cohabiting and married stepfamilies experience higher rates of instability, yet there has been scarce research on outcomes associated with these types of dissolutions
- Parental divorce is consistently associated with worse outcomes for children

Research Questions

- How does mother-child relationship quality change from pre-dissolution to post-dissolution, and do these changes vary by dissolution pathway?
- Does the loss of economic and parental resources explain the change in mother-child relationship quality across different dissolution pathways?

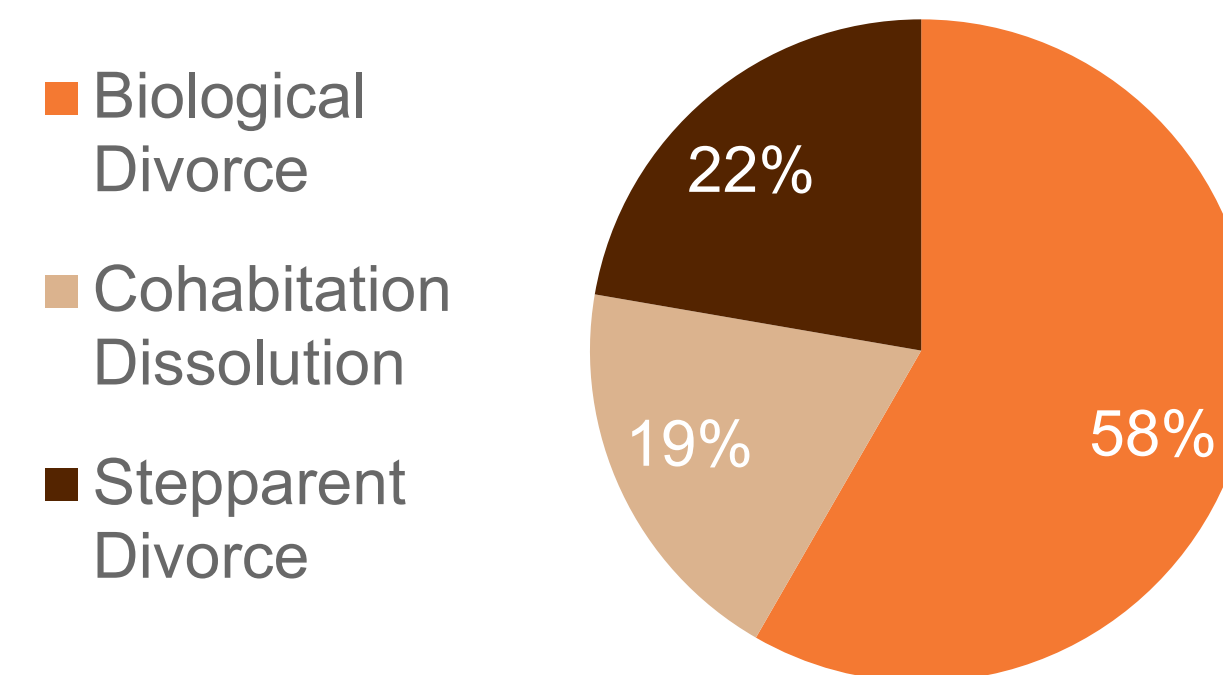
Data and Method

- National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health) Waves I & II
- Analytic Sample: n= 902
 - Includes those who reside with their mother and either their father, mother's husband, or mother's partner in Wave I, and indicated a change to not having the same male figure in the home by Wave II.
- Ordinary Least Squares Regression

Dissolution Pathways

- Dissolution pathway: A dissolution or divorce a child experiences between their parental figures
 - Divorce of biological parents (Biological Divorce, n= 526)
 - Divorce of biological mother and stepfather (Stepparent Divorce, n= 201)
 - Dissolution of biological mother and cohabiting partner (Cohabitation Dissolution, n= 175)

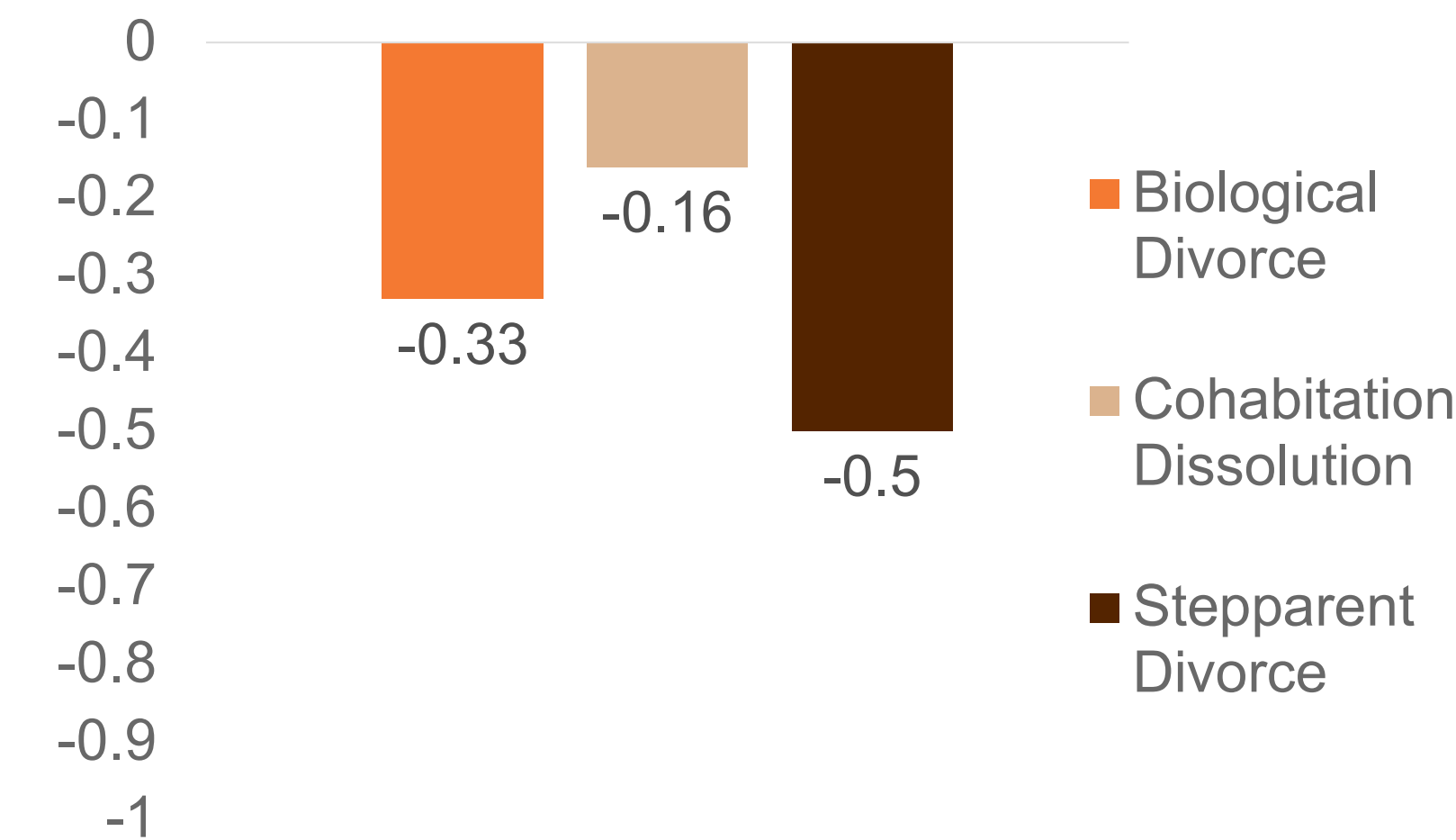
Figure 1. Sample by Dissolution Pathway



Mother-Child Relationship Quality

- Mother-child relationship quality is assessed using five questions asked of adolescents in Wave I and Wave II ($\alpha=.83$ WI & $\alpha=.85$ WII)
- Change in mother-child relationship quality (Wave II-Wave I)

Figure 2. Changes in Mother-Child Relationship Quality



Logistic Regression

Table 1. Change in Mother-Child Relationship Quality

	Model 1	Model 4
Biological Parent Divorce (ref)		
Cohab Dissolution	0.178	0.124
Step Divorce	-0.161	0.251
Econ and Parenting Resources		
Change in Autonomy		0.121
Change in Father Closeness		-0.180*
Change in Social Support		0.243***
Change in Maternal Availability		0.087
Mother's Wave I SES		0.039
Change in Work Hours		
No change between waves (ref)		
Increase hours		0.94**
Decrease hours		0.333
Mother Characteristics		
Mother Repartnered (ref=no)		0.667**
Adolescent Characteristics		
W1 Age		
White (ref)		
Black		0.54
Hispanic		0.909*
Other		-0.766
Gender (ref=male)		0.018
Constant	-0.334 [†]	-3.24*

[†]p<.10, *p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001

Conclusion and Future Research

- The change in mother-child relationship quality does not significantly differ across the three dissolution pathways
- Examine other areas of well-being including academic outcomes, delinquent behaviors, and psychological well-being
- Explore long-term well-being of adolescents who have experienced different dissolution pathways