Parent’s Marital Status and Mental Health in Young Adulthood

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Research Questions
- What is the association between parent’s marital status and mental health in young adulthood?
- Does gender moderate the association between parent’s marital status and depression?

Significance
- Growing concerns about depression in the U.S.
- Parental depression can negatively impact a child’s well-being and growth.

Background
- Adults who come from broken homes are almost twice as likely to attempt suicide than those who do not come from broken homes (Parker, 2019).
- Today, only about 60% of children in the United States live with their married, biological parents (D’Onofrio & Emery, 2019).
- According to the Mayo Clinic, depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest, which includes how you think, feel, and behave.

Hypothesis
- If the child’s parents are divorced/separated, then they will have higher depression levels.
- Females will be more depressed and most affected by parent’s marital status.

Dependent Measure
Depression in Young Adulthood:
Mean of 7 questions: During the past 7 days, how often did you feel?
- bothered
- could not shake off the blues
- had trouble keeping your mind on what you were doing
- depressed
- too tired to do things
- sad
- disliked

Independent Measure
Parent’s Marital Status

Control Measure
- Respondent’s Gender
  Male: 48%
  Female: 52%

Results
Mean Depression by Parents Marital Status

Mean Depression by Parents Marital Status by Gender

Summary of Findings
- There are higher depression levels for female children that have parents who are never married or divorced.
- Females whose parents were never married have the highest overall depression, whereas married men have the least depression.
- Females are more depressed overall than men.

Limitations & Future Directions
- Limitations include age of data; social media has grown since the time the data was collected.
- Directions for future research would be to provide resources to children with divorced parents.
- Guidance counselors should pay more attention to academic performance and social habits with peers.
- End the stigma of depression.

References