The Impact of Participant-led ‘Assets’ During Adolescence of Early Adult Health and Well-being in the UK: Longitudinal Analysis and Well-being Trajectories Using the ‘Next Steps’ Dataset

1JA McGowan*, 2A Hagell, 2E Rigby, 2R Shah, 1M Heyes, 2D Hargreaves, 1R Viner. 1Institute of Child Health, University College London, London, UK; 2Association for Young People's Health, London, UK; 1Imperial College London, London, UK

Background While employment and education rates have been extensively studied, little is known about how general well-being through early-late adolescence impacts well-being into adulthood. Utilising participant-led research, we mapped the presence and trajectories of ‘assets’ identified by young people (YP) as important during their adolescence to ‘success’ in early adulthood.

Methods YP identified four ‘assets’: ‘appropriate skills’, ‘social capital’, ‘financial support’ and ‘emotional support’, which were mapped across early (T1: age 13–15), mid (T2: 16–17), and late (T3: 18–20) adolescence. Four adult (age 25–26) outcomes were also identified: ‘suitable/rewarding work’, ‘satisfactory housing’, ‘good relationships’, and ‘healthy habits’. The presence of these were identified using binary measures, developed from the ‘Next Steps’ dataset - a yearly longitudinal study following English individuals born in 1989/1990 (N=15,770). Trajectories were categorised as an asset being present and trajectories of adulthood. Utilising participant-led research, we mapped the presence of these were identified using binary measures, developed from the ‘Next Steps’ dataset - a yearly longitudinal study following English individuals born in 1989/1990 (N=15,770). Trajectories were categorised as an asset being ‘stable high’, ‘stable low’, ‘late rising’ (T3), ‘early rising’ (T2), ‘late falling’, ‘early falling’, and ‘unstable’.

Results A complete case analysis was performed. Data was weighted using the standard LSYPE weightings. Assets were reported by 90% (emotional support) – 20% (confidence and connections) of young people, and generally decreased in prevalence over adolescence (ps<0.001). At age 25, just over half of YP reported ‘satisfactory housing’ (53.8%, SE=0.8) or ‘suitable/rewarding work’ (59.9%, SE=0.7). The majority reported ‘good relationships’ (87.7%, SE=0.5) and ‘healthy habits’ (74.3%, SE=0.6).

Using regression analyses adjusted for sex and ethnicity, we identified that retaining ‘suitable/rewarding work’ at age 25/26 was associated with the presence of ‘skills’ (T1:Coef=1.36, 95% CI=1.18–1.58; T2:Coef=1.30, 95% CI=1.13–1.49); T3: Coef=1.29, 95%CI=1.10–1.51, ps<0.001) and ‘financial support’ (T1:Coef=1.21, 95% CI=1.04–1.41, T2:Coef=1.27, 95% CI=1.05–1.52; T3:Coef=1.21, 95% CI=1.05–1.39, ps=0.01) at all adolescent age-bands, and ‘confidence and connections’ at ages 16–20. ‘Satisfactory housing’ was associated with skills, confidence & connections, and financial support at all time-points. ‘Good relationships’ was associated with all assets, except financial support at T3. ‘Healthy habits’ was not consistently related to any asset. Regardless of outcome, the benefits of the asset trajectories remained the same: compared to ‘stable low’ trajectories, ‘stable high’ trajectories showed the largest benefit across all assets. For ‘skills’, any trajectory other than ‘stable low’ had a statistically significant positive adult outcome (ps<0.002). For ‘confidence and connections’ and ‘financial support’, ‘early rising’, ‘stable high’, and ‘late falling’ were consistently related with a positive outcome (ps<0.01 and <0.03).

Conclusion The assets available to adolescents impact their young adult outcomes across distinct pathways, but not all assets are commonly available to YP. The stability of these assets across adolescence is of particular importance to adult outcomes, as is their presence in early-mid adolescence.