Time Trends in Adolescent Mental Health
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Abstract

Several lines of evidence suggest that rates of adolescent mental health problems rose in some societies over the second half of the twentieth century. Like changing trends in physical health problems (such as obesity), this evidence is of major public health concern; it may also offer a novel approach to identifying risk and protective factors for young people’s mental health. This paper will begin by providing a brief overview of the methodological challenges faced in studies of time trends, and the types of evidence available for examining trends in adolescent mental health. Illustrative data on recent trends in a variety of types of mental health problems (some common, some more severe) will then be presented. These will be used to raise questions about (i) whether these data reflect changes in underlying rates of mental health problems, or changing patterns of recognition by parents and professionals; and (ii) where underlying rates do appear to have changed, which types of risk and protective factors that may have contributed to these trends.

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Recent publications in relation to time trends include:
