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Presentation title: Neighbourhood context and externalizing behaviours during childhood and adolescence: The mediational role of family factors

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Externalizing behaviours have been associated with several negative long-term outcomes. Recent research have highlighted the influence of neighbourhood factors, like socioeconomic deprivation and social/physical disorders in the explanation of such behaviours, but only a relatively small number of studies accounted for the mediational role that other variables, such as family factors, might play this relationship. Additionally, the research analysing the role of these factors across different developmental periods is limited. Therefore, this study aimed to analyse the direct and indirect effects of neighbourhood (physical/social disorders, neighbourhood attachment) and family (family socioeconomic vulnerability, positive/negative parenting practices) variables on externalizing behaviour in late childhood (7 – 9 years old), early adolescence (10 – 13 years old) and late adolescence (14 – 17 years old).

Data was gathered through different informants and self-report measures. Regarding the first age group, parental reports were used. As for the adolescent groups, questionnaires aiming both parents and youth were delivered.

Results suggested that, in late childhood, the effect of socioeconomic vulnerability on externalizing behaviours is fully mediated by negative parenting practices. Regarding early adolescence, the relationship between neighbourhood attachment and externalizing behaviour is mediated by neighbourhood disorders. In adolescence, a mediational effect between positive parenting practices and externalizing behaviour through neighbourhood attachment was found. These data suggest that in childhood, negative parental practices are the most relevant factors in explaining externalizing behaviours. However, as the time goes, family loose part of its influence and the neighbourhood context seems to become more significant in explaining youth's externalizing behaviours.