This year, the *Journal of Research on Adolescence* published 4 issues with 62 articles covering a range of topics of critical importance to adolescent development, behavior, and adjustment. The “Year in Review” is a new feature of *JRA* that provides a venue for reflecting on the collective contribution of these articles and the potential “end use” of these findings in real-world settings. Because several common themes are represented across articles, it is possible to consider the lessons learned from some of these diverse studies and their translational significance for today’s youth.

The majority of the articles published this year focused on understanding and preventing mental health and behavior problems, including internalizing and externalizing symptoms, nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI), stress reactivity, peer rejection, smoking, alcohol and substance use, bullying and victimization, violence, delinquency, and involvement in negative peer groups and juvenile gangs. A smaller set of articles focused on promoting well-being, including academic achievement and educational success, prosocial behavior, civic engagement, emotional adjustment, and a sense of purpose. Clearly, these are issues of major concern and importance for adolescents in the United States and internationally.

Although most studies were conducted with adolescents from North America and Western Europe, publications in *JRA* included samples from around the world, and ethnic minority youth were well represented across articles. Some of the studies published this year focused specifically on processes within historically underrepresented cultural groups. For example, Gfellner and Armstrong (22:2) examined ethnic identity, ego development, and ego strength in a sample of Canadian First Nation adolescents. They found that youth who identified strongly with indigenous culture demonstrated greater ego strengths than bicultural adolescents. In an increasingly multicultural world, it is important to understand how and for whom ethnic identity can operate as a protective factor.

Looking at cultural and historical differences as potential moderators of the relation between aggression, shyness, and adjustment in China, Liu, Chen, Li, and French (22:3) found that changes in the relation between shyness and adjustment were moderated by cultural norms linked to historical time periods. In a cohort studied in 1994, shyness predicted positive adjustment outcomes, whereas in the 2008 cohort, shyness predicted negative outcomes such as loneliness and lower peer preference scores. These findings suggest that broad cultural norms can impact the adaptive function of adolescent behaviors over time.

Articles focused on understanding and preventing problems of adolescence spanned a range of topics and methodologies, with an increasing number of studies drawing on large-scale, longitudinal samples. A common theme across several of these articles was the overlap or comorbidity of psychological and behavioral problems among male and female adolescents. For example, Bjärehed, Wångby-Lundh, and Lundh (22:4) identified two particularly high-risk groups of Swedish adolescent girls who engaged in high-frequent NSSI (nonsuicidal self-injury), one group with high comorbid internalizing and externalizing problems and the other that mainly showed internalizing disorders and engaged primarily in cutting behavior. In addition, these behavioral patterns were relatively stable over time among girls.

In another study of psychological correlates of bullying and victimization among Greek-Cypriot adolescents, Fanti and Kimonis (22:4) reported that bullying behaviors were highest among youth who also scored high on narcissism, impulsivity, or conduct problems, particularly for those with high callous-unemotional (CU) traits. Whitbeck, Sittner

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Hartshorn, McQuillan, and Crawford (22:4) reported that North American indigenous adolescents who met diagnostic criteria for major depressive episode and conduct disorder were more likely to initiate early daily smoking. Haas and Smith (22:4) reported a higher prevalence of alcohol-related problems in college freshmen who were current or past smokers, and Holloway et al. (22:2) reported higher rates of cigarette smoking in YMSM (young men who have sex with men). These studies highlight the importance of identifying and providing prevention programming for youth with multiple psychological and behavioral problems and underscore the importance of identifying common predictors to guide prevention efforts across diverse risk groups.

Looking at potential predictors of overlapping mental health and behavior problems, Swisher and Roettger (22:4) found that father incarceration during childhood and adolescence was associated with increased depression and delinquency for White, Black, and Hispanic U.S. youth in the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health). Shilo and Savaya (22:2) examined the added burden of disadvantaged status on mental health and well-being among LGB (lesbian, gay, and bisexual) Israeli adolescents, with findings suggesting higher levels of mental vulnerability. In a longitudinal study of youth followed up from ages 10 to 27, Kiff et al. (22:2) found that neighborhood adversity predicted a range of adolescent problems including depression, alcohol use disorders, and HIV risk, with early adjustment predicting later outcomes. McNaughton Reyes, Foshee, Bauer, and Ennett (22:3) found concurrent associations between alcohol use and dating aggression, with associations between trajectories of these two behaviors reduced substantially when common causes were controlled.

Genetic influences also may portend more than one type of difficulty in adolescence. In an intriguing twin study with adolescents in the UK, McAdams, Rowe, Rijsdijk, Maughan, and Eley (22:1) found that both aggression and delinquency have genetic effects in common with alcohol consumption and cannabis use. Brooker, Berenbaum, Bricker, Corley, and Wadsworth (22:4) demonstrated the combined effects of socialization (adoption) and the resulting impact on biological development (early puberty) on both early sexual initiation and conduct disorder symptoms among U.S. adoptees. Across these studies, findings reported in JRA suggest there may be multiple common predictors of co-occurring psychological and behavioral problems. Indeed, both an individual’s biological birth certificate and his or her life experiences combine across time to predict a range of difficulties and problems frequently co-occur.

Another set of studies examined one or more predictors of a specific type of mental health or behavior problem. These predictors included individual, peer, family, school, community, and cultural factors. Outcomes included high-risk sexual behavior, smoking and alcohol use, and aggression, violence, and delinquency. Although most studies acknowledged the coalescence of risk factors across an individual’s social ecology, with some exceptions (e.g., Stoddard, Zimmerman, and Bauermeister, 22:3), they tended to focus on risk within a specific context and in relation to a particular social problem.

A small number of studies examined predictors of high-risk sexual behavior. For example, in a study of African American youth in the United States, Pingel et al. (22:2) found that both maternal and paternal support were associated with more condom use. Gardner, Martin, and Brooks-Gunn (22:1) also found that caregiver warmth was inversely associated with early sexual initiation and sex with multiple partners in urban U.S. neighborhoods with high and low levels of disadvantage. In a qualitative study of adolescents in rural Kenya, Puffer et al. (22:1) reported that adolescents used religious coping behaviors such as praying for strength to avoid high-risk sexual behavior. These studies highlight the importance of support networks, through either families or religious beliefs, in promoting healthy sexual practices.

Another set of studies looked at predictors of smoking and alcohol use. Findings from a large-scale longitudinal study of U.S. youth reported by Tucker et al. (22:1) add to a large body of literature demonstrating that having friends who smoke, particularly best friends, is associated with initiation and escalation of smoking. In addition, this relation was not moderated by other known risk factors such as poor grades, delinquency, school problems, depression, or household access. From a translational perspective, these findings suggest that efforts to counteract the strong effects of peer influences on behaviors may be important targets of prevention programs.

Consistent with studies that demonstrated the important influence of parents on high-risk sexual behavior, Ohannessian (22:3) reported that paternal problem drinking predicted boys’ alcohol use and maternal problem drinking predicted girls’ alcohol use. For girls, these relations were mediated by adolescent–parent communication. Of particular
interest in this study is the importance of considering parental effects by gender of both the adolescent and the parent. In a related study using Add Health data, Rocheleau and Swisher (22:4) found that adolescent work hours were negatively associated with alcohol use but only among youth from single-parent households.

Several studies focused on school and peer predictors of adolescent aggression, violence, and delinquency. Using data from the 1986 Finland Birth Cohort Study, Savolainen et al. (22:1) found that poor academic performance and lower levels of school attachment increased the risk of criminal conviction independent of preexisting differences in antisocial propensity and other risk factors. Adding to the literature linking school experiences with antisocial outcomes, Wang and Dishion (22:1) examined trajectories of change in adolescents’ perceptions of multiple dimensions of school climate on problem behaviors of U.S. teenagers. Declines in each dimension of school climate were associated with increases in behavior problems. They also found that the relation of peer affiliation to problem behavior was moderated by school climate, providing strong support for the potential role of school climate in prevention.

Looking at peer influences among Indonesian youth, French, Purwono, and Rodkin (22:2) found that peers associated with others who were similar to them in religiosity and that religiosity was negatively associated with involvement in antisocial behavior. On the other hand, Clemans, Graber, and Bettencourt (22:3) found that U.S. middle school students who indicated higher “respect” for popular peers displayed higher levels of aggression, although respect for parents and teachers was negatively associated with aggression.

Fewer studies examined the specific mechanisms of influence (mediators) of relations between difficult experiences and problematic outcomes. One exception is a study by Lucas-Thompson (22:4). This study examined the effects of interparental conflict on stress physiology in late adolescence, using participants from the NICHD Study of Early Child Care and Development in the United States. Consistent with findings from studies of children, Lucas-Thompson found that marital conflict disrupted physiological functioning in adolescence. Specifically, it was associated with dampened physiological stress responses but sensitized emotional responses. Looking at the effects of positive family experiences on mediators of adjustment, Diamond, Fagundes, and Butterworth (22:1) found that adolescents with low levels of attachment insecurity demonstrated the highest levels of empathic responsiveness.

In addition to studies of problematic outcomes, a smaller group of studies examined predictors of well-being, particularly educational and academic achievement. In an ethnically diverse, longitudinal study of youth in grades 7 to 11, Wang and Eccles (22:1) found that school engagement, particularly school participation and self-regulated learning, predicted improvements in grade point average over time. In a nationally representative sample of U.S. high school students, Carolan (22:3) reported that math achievement was higher among teenagers whose parents knew their friends’ parents, but only in small high schools. Using data from the Panel Study of Income Dynamics Child Development supplement, Hofferth and Moon (22:2) found that groups that traditionally use computers less (girls, minority children) benefited more from use, particularly in reading and problem-solving skills. Mahoney and Vest (22:3) found that participation in organized out-of-school activities predicted greater educational attainment and civic engagement in a nationally representative sample of U.S. teenagers.

Looking beyond academic achievement to overall adjustment and well-being, the importance of social connectedness was highlighted. In a study of Asian-American youth, Kiang (22:1) found that activities linked with social engagement and family participation were associated with a greater sense of purpose and happiness. Jose, Ryan, and Pryor (22:2) found that social connectedness across multiple domains (family, school, peers, neighborhood) predicted psychological well-being and life satisfaction over time.

Taken as a group, these studies of problem behaviors and adjustment suggest important directions for prevention of adolescent mental health and behavior problems and promotion of well-being. Many of these studies are based on longitudinal data with large samples of youth, and several involve youth from different countries around the world. However, etiological studies of risk and protective factors and positive youth development greatly outnumbered studies of preventive interventions. Only two prevention-related studies were published in JRA. D’Amico et al. (22:3) examined variations in attendance by ethnicity and risk status for after-school, voluntary alcohol and drug programs in middle school. Connell, Klostermann, and Dishion (22:2) examined effects of the Family Check Up (FCU) family intervention on arrests across three developmental trajectories, with intervention...
effects only noted for the adolescent-onset group. Although not formally a preventive intervention, Ozer and Wright (22:2) found that youth-led participatory research projects led to greater engagement with adults, autonomy, and self-efficacy.

Why were so few articles published on the effects of targeted preventive interventions and benefits of established practices in middle and high schools (e.g., service learning and civic engagement programs, sports activities, music programs)? If we are to increase the utility of research on adolescent development, we must move forward and translate these findings into policies, practices, and programs that prevent risk behaviors and promote healthy development. An important challenge to researchers is to consider the “end use” of empirical findings across a range of contexts in the real world when designing developmental studies.

To develop broad-based policies and programs, it is important to identify common processes across representative samples that predict success and prevent risk during adolescence, although the specific mechanisms of influence may vary by factors such as age, gender, and culture. Consider the effects of peers, schools, families, and communities. Many of the articles published this year in JRA add to a well-established literature demonstrating the importance of social connectedness across contexts. Positive school climate, prosocial peer groups, caregiver warmth, family and community support networks, and other factors contribute to well-being and prevention of problems. Less is known about how we can effectively promote social connectedness through policies and programs that are sensitive to contextual variations and can be readily implemented in real-world settings. For teenagers across the globe, these real-world settings are increasingly dominated by technology and electronic communication, requiring us to expand our understanding of adolescent development and what we can do to enhance it for all youth and for those who are most vulnerable.