



Children's Lives in Ireland:

Insights from the
Growing up in Ireland
Study

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Research on Children in Ireland

Barren landscape of research until around mid 1990s

Reliant upon data gathered elsewhere, notably in the UK

National Children's Strategy (2000)



Children's lives will be better understood



Growing Up in Ireland

National Longitudinal
Study of Children



**Growing Up
in Ireland**
National Longitudinal
Study of Children

Infant Cohort

Random sample drawn from Child Benefit Register Population
73,362

9 months

- 11,134
- Interviewed between September 2008 and April 2009
- 69% positive response rate of valid contacts made

3 years

- 9,793
- Interviewed between December 2010 and June 2011
- 87.96% retention rate

5 years

- 9,001
- Interviewed between December 2012 and June 2013
- 91.91% retention rate (from Wave 2; 80.84% from Wave 1)

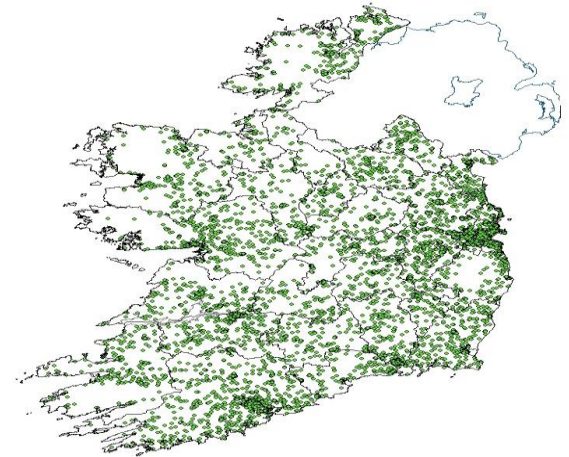
7 years

- 5,308
- Inter-wave contact, postal questionnaire only
- Completed between March and October 2016

9 years

- 7,563
- Full home and school-based assessment
- Completed between June 2017 and August 2018

Phase 1 - 2006-2014



Phase 2 - 2015-2019



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Child Cohort

Representative sample of 910 primary schools drawn from the national total of 3200 schools - random sample of children drawn from within the 910 schools.

9 years

- 8,568
- Interviewed between September 2007 and April 2008
- Response rates: 82% at school level, 57% at family level

13 years

- 7,535
- Interviewed between August 2011 and February 2012
- 86.37% retention rate

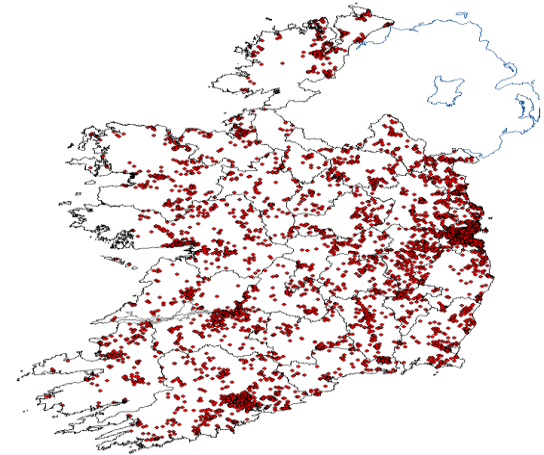
17 years

- 6,216
- Interviewed between August 2015 and March 2016
- Full home based assessment, linkage to State examination results

20 years

- 5,191
- Interviewed between August 2018 and June 2019
- Link to State examination results/CAO process

Phase 1 - 2006-2014



Phase 2 - 2015-2019



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Cohort effects + effects of timing

Child Cohort

9 years

13 years

17 years

20 years

Infant Cohort

9 months

3 years

5 years

7 years

9 years

13 years



Are children's lives better or worse today?

Ireland's 20-year-olds are stressed, living with their parents and worried about housing

Financial security and a good job were their priorities for the next 10 years, according to the Growing Up In Ireland report.



New survey shows 'alarming' growth in levels of anxiety and depression among young



By Evelyn Ring
Irish Examiner Reporter

Follow @EvelynRing



Tuesday, November 19, 2019 - 03:43 PM

More than one in five adolescents suffer from severe anxiety, it has emerged.

THE IRISH TIMES

Sun, Nov 24, 2019

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Seven in 10 older Irish children do not get enough exercise

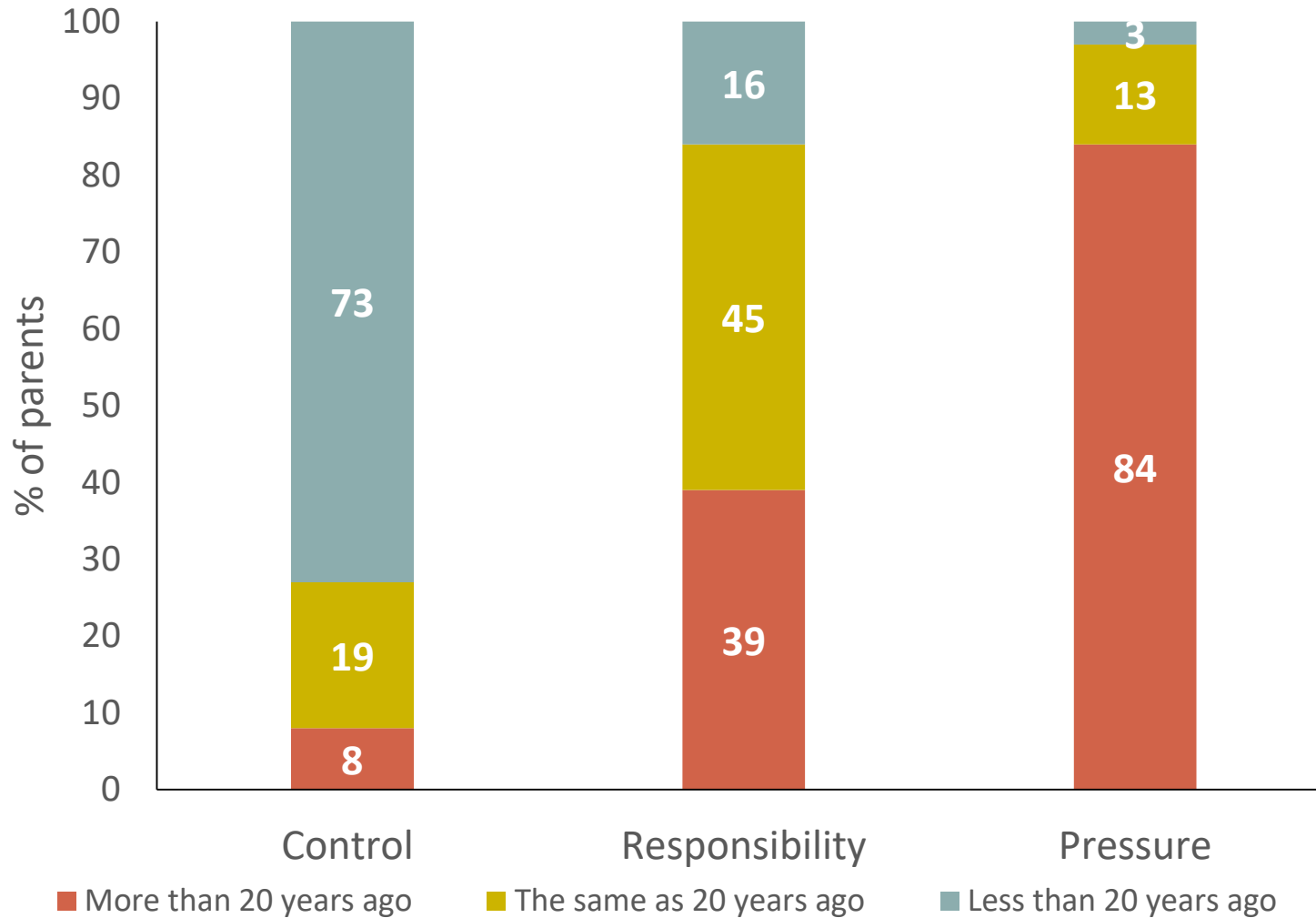
Results 'very concerning', with gender gap of 15% the largest outside the US

Thu, Nov 21, 2019, 23:30

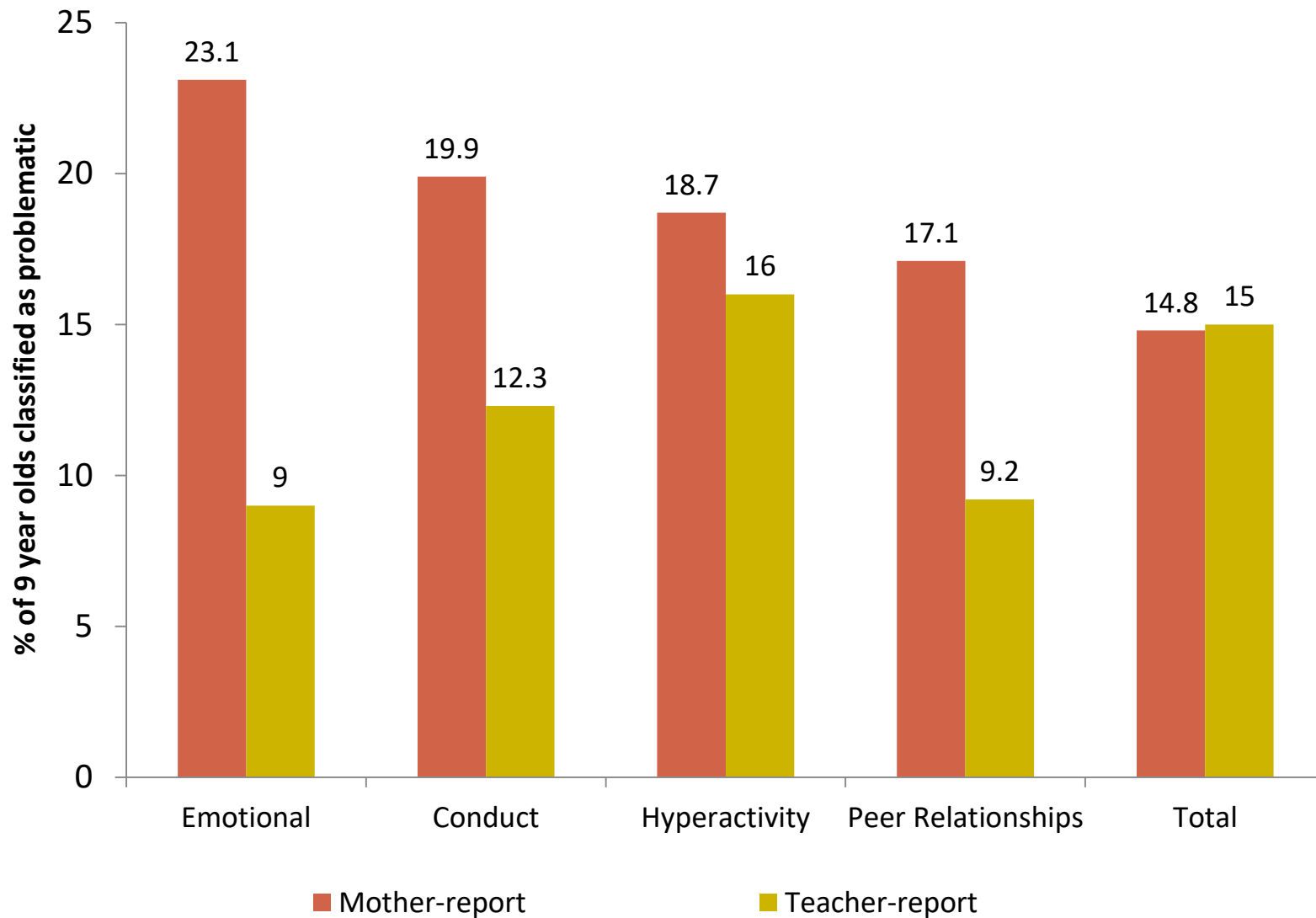
Paul Cullen Health Editor



Is parenting more difficult?



How are children doing?



How are children doing?

Comparable figures from Millennium Cohort Study (UK) – 20%

At age 13 years – 12% displaying difficulties

MCS (UK) at 11 years – 15%

All based on parent-report

Based on self-report...

At age 13 – using Short Moods and Feelings Questionnaire

GUI average score: 3.9

MCS average score: 5.4

Cut-off score of 8: 15.9 classified as displaying elevated symptoms

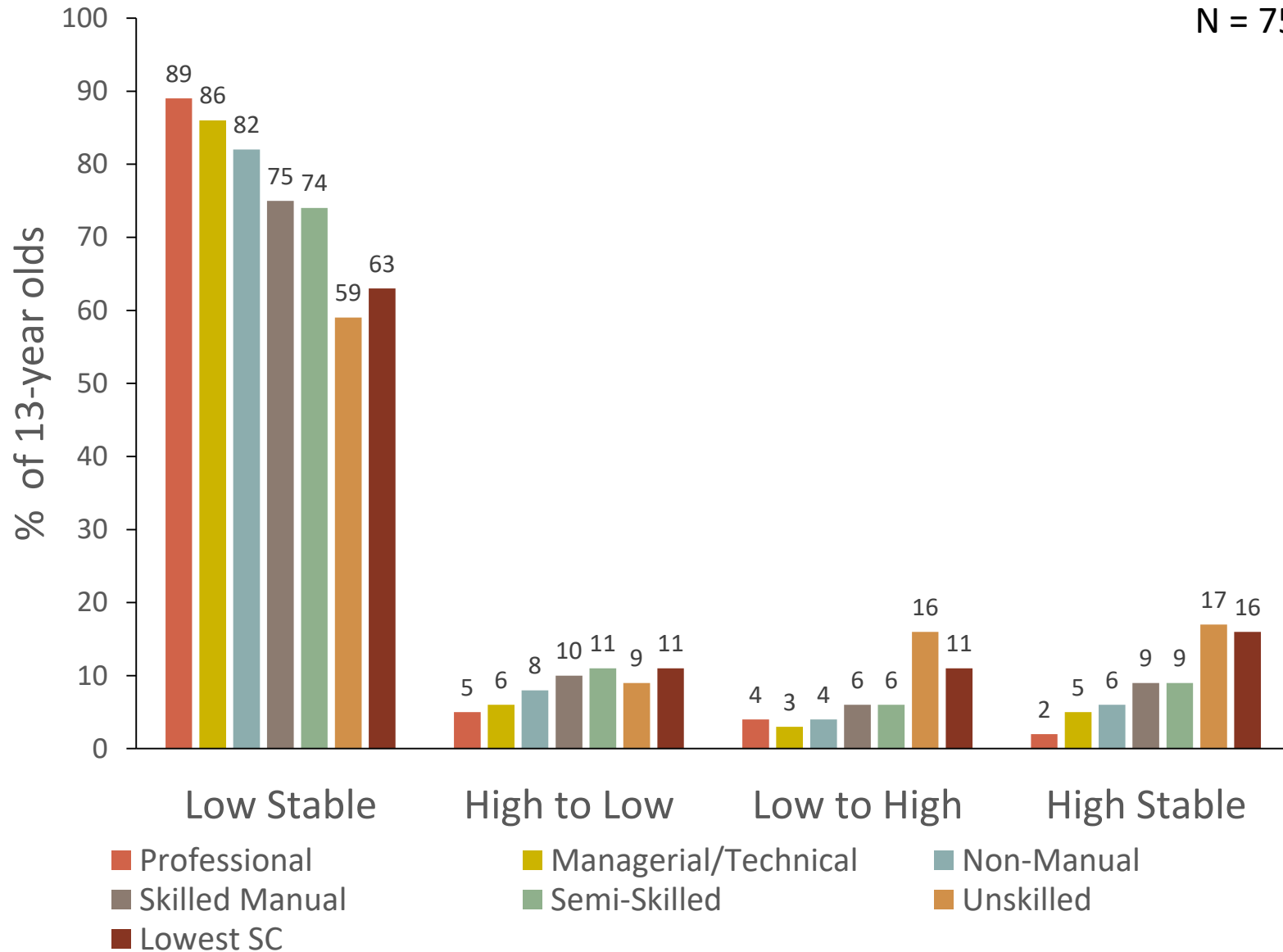
Comparative symptoms from Longitudinal Study of Australian Children: 26%

Stability & Change

		Wave 1	
		Not at risk of difficulty	At risk of difficulty
Wave 2	Not at risk of difficulty	79.8% (6006)	7.9% (591)
	At risk of difficulty	5.3% (396)	12.3% (927)

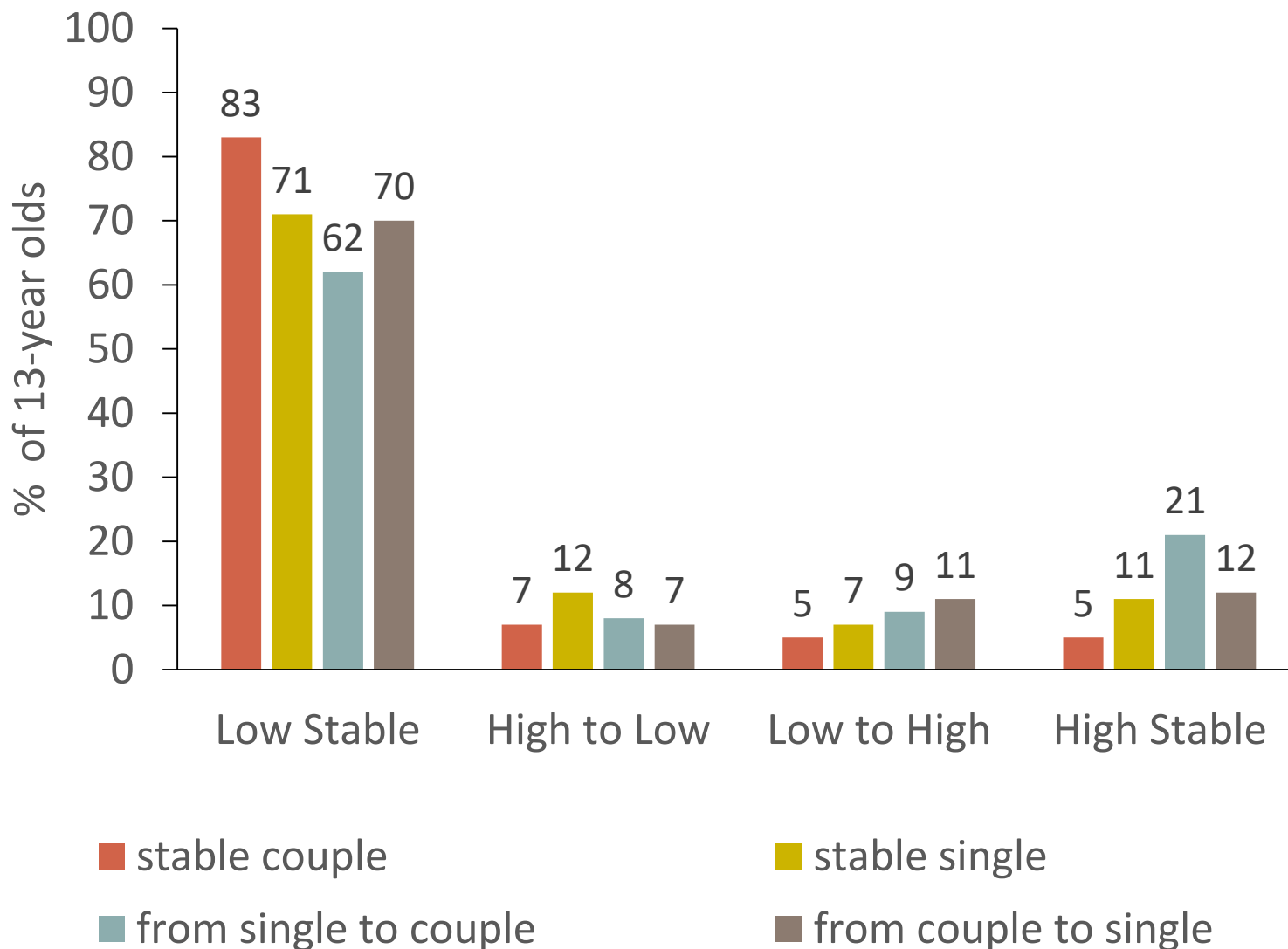
Stability & Change and Social Class

N = 7524



Stability & Change and Change in Family Structure

N = 7523



Family Structure Differences

Extend to a range of outcomes: rates of depressive symptomatology at age 13 years, self-concept, achievement scores

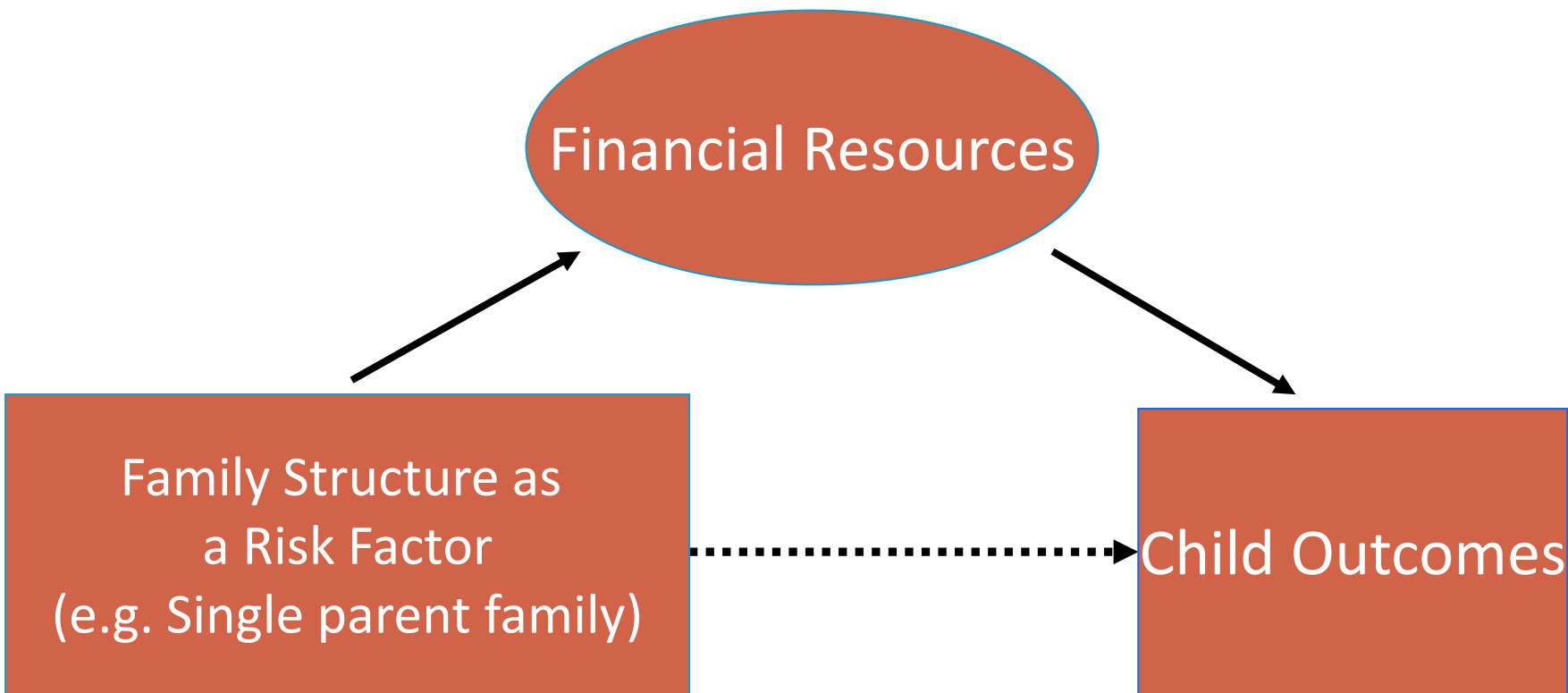
Differences tend to be small in magnitude

Majority of children in single-parent households are doing well

However....small occurrences of disadvantage across multiple domains of functioning cumulatively accrue to reflect overall higher levels of disadvantage

Modest differences that affect a substantial minority of of the population – of huge importance at population level

Family Structure Differences



Two-fifths of single parent households were in the lowest income quintile (wave 1): corresponding percentage for two-parent households was 16%.

One-fifth of single parent households received 100% of income from social welfare (4% and 7% of two-parent households at waves 1 and 2 respectively)

Family Structure Differences

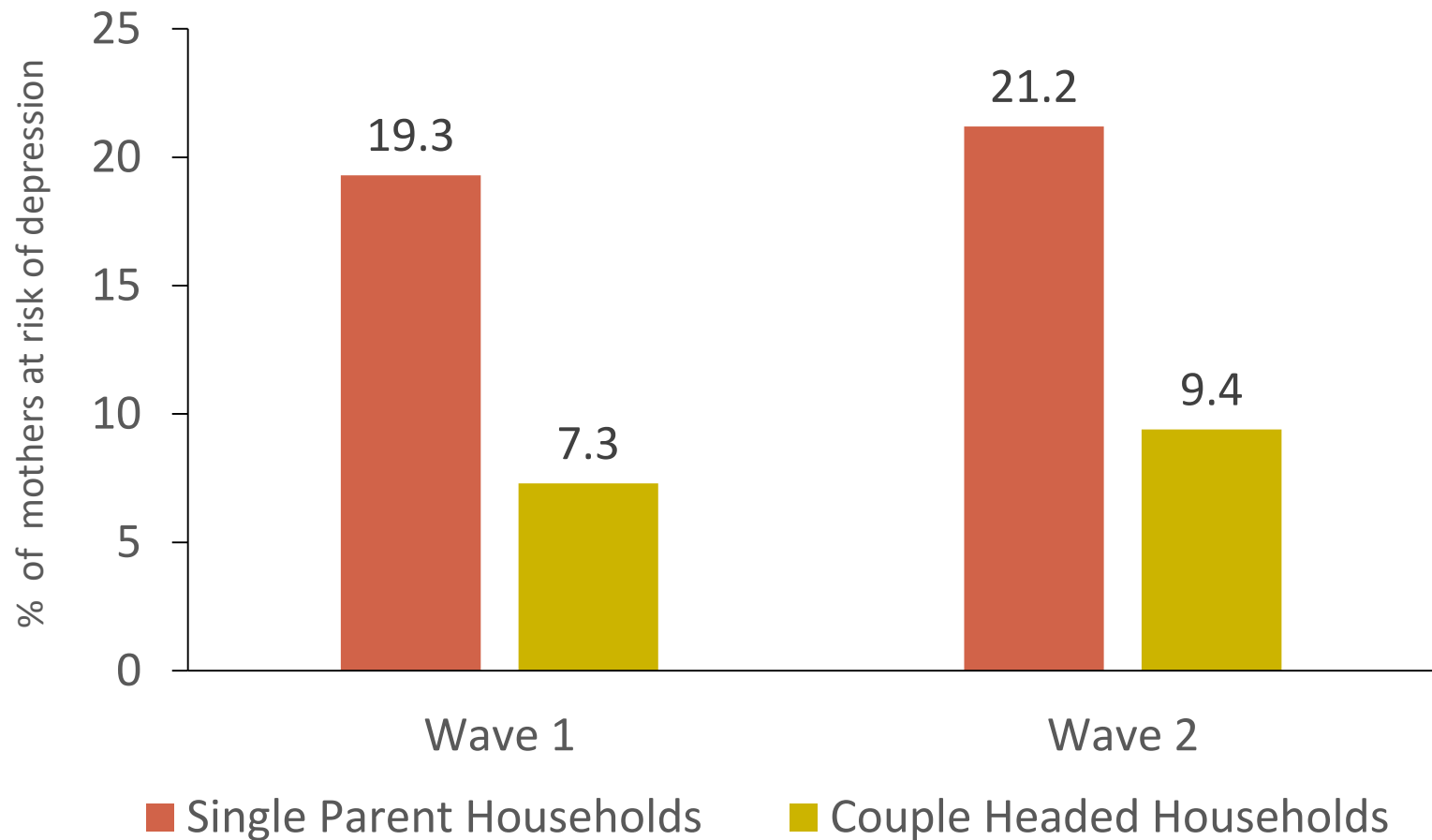
Family Processes

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graph TD; A["Family Structure as a Risk Factor  
(e.g. Single parent family)"] --> B("Family Processes"); B --> C["Child Outcomes"]; A -.-> C;
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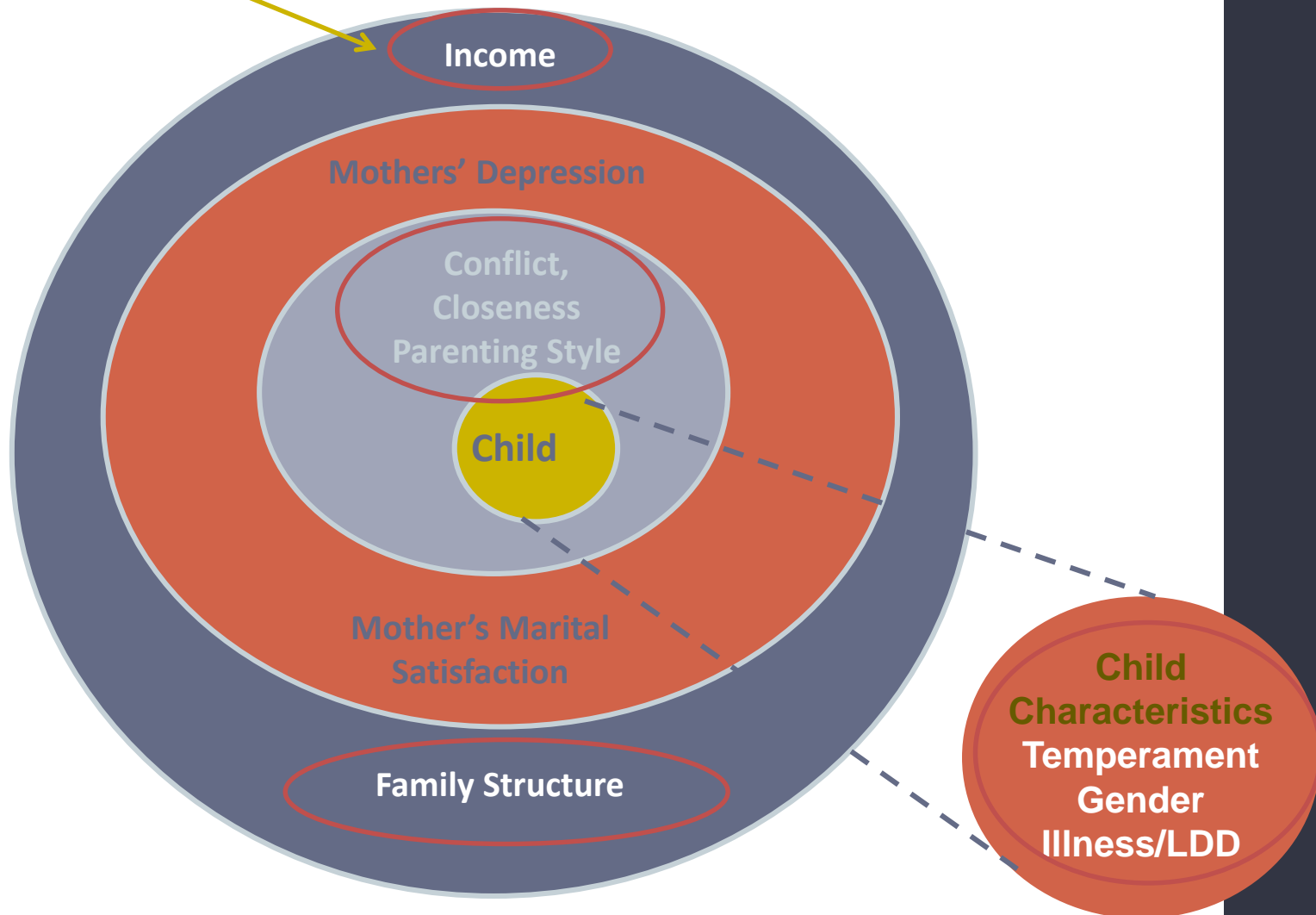
Family Structure as
a Risk Factor
(e.g. Single parent family)

Child Outcomes

Risk of Depression



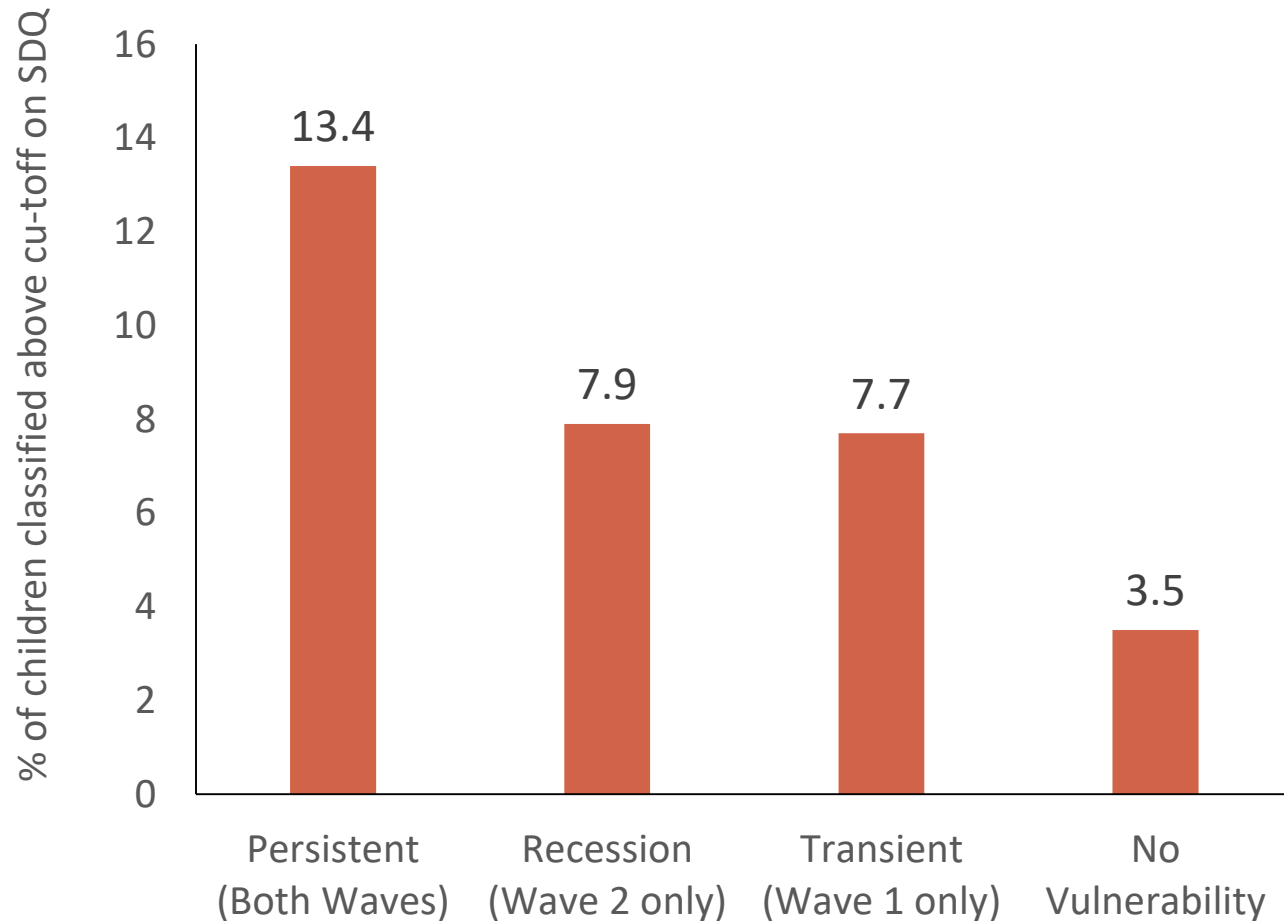
Only 1st & 2nd Income Quintile



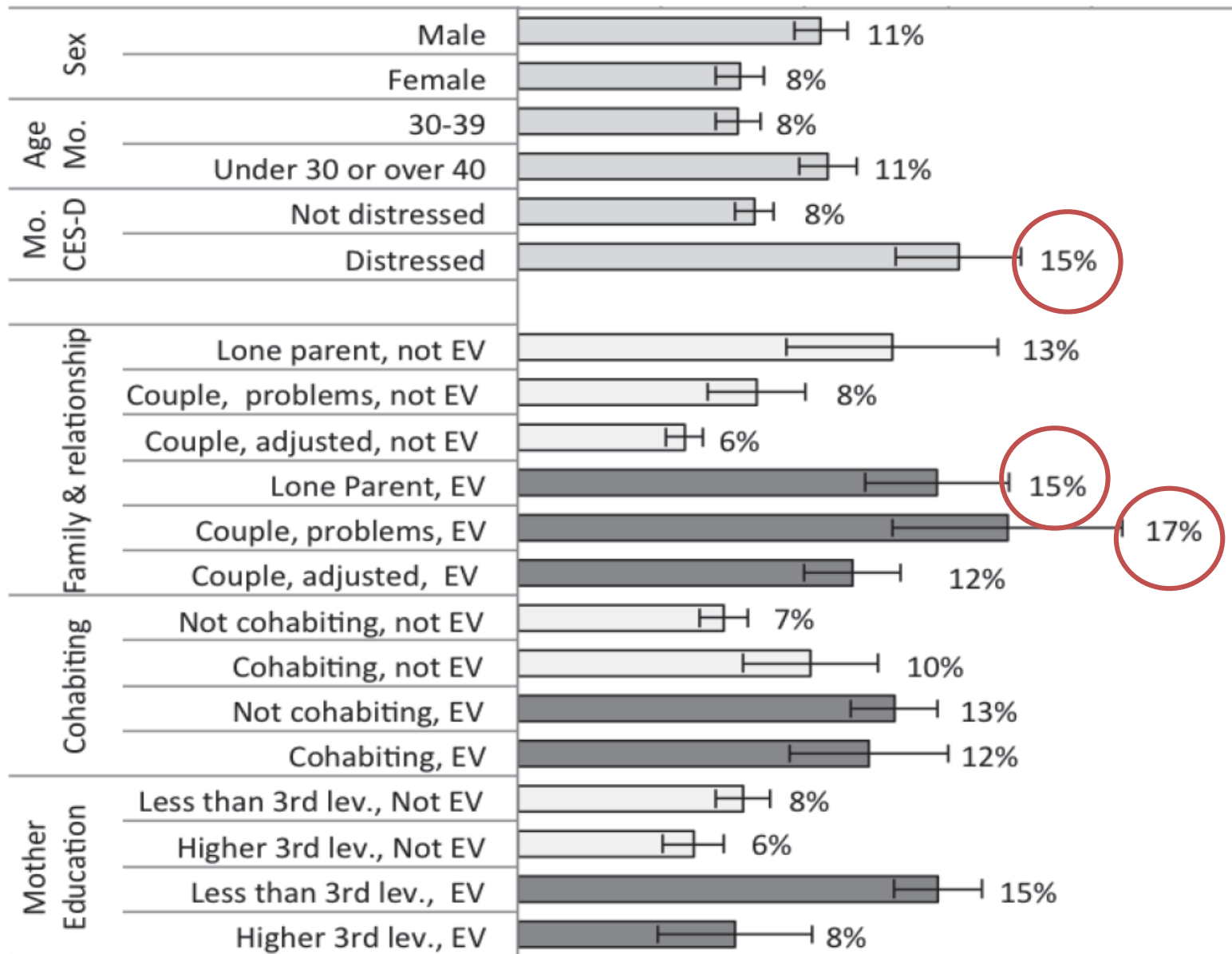
It is through day-to-day interactions that children experience in their everyday lives that the effects of structural disadvantage can manifest

Effects of Economic Recession

Persistently vulnerable – 10%; Recession vulnerable – 15%; Transient vulnerable – 5%



Effects of Economic Recession



In Conclusion

Social structures always exert their influence through their effect on social interaction.

In this sense, social structures and social processes are interconnected and inseparable phenomena... family structure is an important risk factor for child adjustment problems because it is related to family processes known to increase a child's chances for developmental difficulties" (Simons, 1996, p. 216)

Danger of placing too much responsibility on the individual to resist and overcome structural inequalities –
 result in marginalisation
 relieve those who are responsible for upholding systems and their inequalities