

SOCI 385

Meier and Musick (2014)

Motivation

“Estimates of average effects, however, may mask important variation in the link between family meals and well-being; in particular, family meals may be more or less helpful based on the quality of family relationships.” (13)

Research Questions

“We contribute to the growing literature on family meals by asking whether family relationship quality spills over to the dinner table and conditions associations between family dinners and child well-being.” (14)

Hypotheses

“We expected that more frequent family dinners would be associated with larger reductions in depressive symptoms, substance use, and delinquency when family relationships are strong. In the context of poor quality family relationships, we expected more frequent family dinners to be associated with smaller reductions - or perhaps even increases - in these outcomes.” (14)

Variables

Dependent variables related to adolescent well-being

- Depressive symptoms: (scale)
 - How often was each of the following true during the past week: a) bothered by things usually don't bother you; b) felt you could not shake the blues; c) felt you were just as good as other people; d) had trouble keeping your mind on what you were doing; e) felt depressed; f) felt that you were too tired to do things; g) enjoyed life; h) felt sad; i) felt that people disliked you.
- Substance use: (binary indicator of binge drinking, cigarette smoking, or use of marijuana, cocaine, inhalants, and other illegal drugs)
- Delinquency: (scale)

Independent variable is how often families eat dinner together (0-7 scale)

- Low boundary: “On how many of the past 7 days was at least one of your parents in the room with you while you ate your evening meal?”

Controls tapped potential confounders, including dimensions of parenting, family size, family structure, family income, parental education, and maternal employment.

Interactive Models

For the depressive symptoms model: “The interaction term coefficient was negative and statistically significant, indicating that more frequent family dinners were associated with greater declines in depressive symptoms with each unit increase in parent-child relationship quality.”