Development Doesn’t Stop at 18: Developmental Differences Between Young and Less Young Adults

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Study Questions

1. Is there evidence that younger adults function differently from older adults among those with psychiatric disorders?
2. Do those differences reflect developmental change with “maturation” at a particular age?

Race Difference in Age Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>18-30 yr olds</th>
<th>35-54 yr olds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White Non-Hispanic</td>
<td>71.6</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>6.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

χ² (df=3)=62.7, p<.001

Methods

This Analysis
- 1110 subjects with a current psychiatric diagnosis, ages 18-54
- Areas of functioning:
  - In School
  - Not Working
  - Income Below Poverty Level
  - Daily Contact with Friends
  - Not Married

Statistical Methods

**Question 1** 18-30 year olds (younger) & 35-54 year olds (older) compared with Chi-square

**Question 2** Stepwise Multiple Regression (age, gender, and race) and Quangles and Pettits

Preliminary findings (unadjusted variance)
Quangles?

- Visual method to detect a single shift in mean level of a sequence of observations (e.g., rates over an age range).
- The observed rates for each age produce a sequence of rates over the age range, with a minimum and maximum rate value.
- Rates (e.g., in school) are transformed into an angle $\Theta$, by the formula:
  
  $$\Theta = \pi/2 + (\pi \cdot (\Delta(t,k)-\text{min})/(\text{max}-\text{min}))$$

- A unit vector is then constructed, with co-ordinates $(\cos(\Theta), \sin(\Theta))$, for each rate and these vectors are summed and plotted.

Question 1: Functioning by Age Group

**Important developmental changes in functioning occur between younger and older adulthood.**

- Rapid changes end between ages 23-31, with less variability among those over age 35.

**Implications**

- Adult mental health services would benefit from a developmental perspective
- Specialized services or approaches for young adults are needed

**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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