

Abstract

Recent studies have shown that approximately 1 in 3 young adults experience significant financial stress which leads to heightened anxiety levels prompting us to test this growing relationship between economic instability and young adults’ mental health. Understanding how economic instability, insecurity, and debt contribute to the rising anxiety that is commonly observed among young adults and explores its psychological effects is very crucial for preventing financial stress on them. By analyzing existing research on income, socioeconomic class, and mental health outcomes this review demonstrates how financial pressure correlates to chronic stress, uncertainty about futures in both young adults which can lead to physical problems as well. The paper further highlights young adults as a particularly vulnerable group to impacts of financial anxiety because of their limited financial independence, debts from colleges and universities, and uncertain future which can lead to psychological distress. Not only do these burdens cause psychological distress but also, early socioeconomic stress is associated with long-term mental and physical health consequences, including elevated BMI, hypertension, and eating disorder symptoms into adulthood.

Introduction

In contemporary society, financial anxiety and mental health challenges have become increasingly related concerns specifically in its impact on the mental health of young adults. Financial anxiety can be defined as persistent fear or worry about one's financial situation which includes concerns about debt, bills, and job stability. Chronic financial stress has been shown to negatively affect sleep, academic performance, and relationships. Over the past five years inflation within the United States has increased by more than 20% which directly raises the cost of everyday goods affecting low-income individuals and families experiencing financial anxiety/stress. Existing research consistently demonstrates that financial anxiety correlates with higher levels of general anxiety like debt and job insecurity which can worsen over time. This paper addresses this by analyzing the relationship between financial stress and anxiety among young adults who are 18 to 24 years old who might experience higher vulnerability due to their limited financial options, academic pressures, exposure to family financial instability, and psychological processes related to emotional regulation.

Methods

This study used a literature review methodology to examine the relationship between financial stress and anxiety among young adults. Instead of collecting original data we analyzed findings from previously published studies on financial anxiety, socioeconomic stress, debt, psychological distress and physical health. We compared results from different studies to identify common patterns and relationships between financial stress and mental health. The literature reviewed included research examining income, socioeconomic status, student debt, employment uncertainty and early financial hardship. We also considered the long-term effects of financial stress on physical health, including BMI, hypertension, eating disorders and chronic inflammation. The findings from the different sources were organized into several categories, including financial insecurity and anxiety, debt and psychological distress, uncertainty about the future and long-term health effects. By synthesizing the results of existing research, our study identified overall trends and examined how financial stress can affect young adults’ mental and physical health.

Discussion

Empirical data consistently shows a strong relationship between household income and mental health outcomes. Survey data drawn from young adults using a four-point scale that assessed the degree to which various factors negatively affect mental health found that financial worries were the most prominent factor that was influencing an increase in negative mental health among respondents. This relationship is particularly seen among people in lower income populations. Income-based analyses show that anxiety and depression levels increase significantly as annual income decreases. Despite the U.S. being one of the major economic countries in the world, we still have many problems. Most young adults tend to graduate from university and work right away due to tuition debt. This puts a heavy burden on students and in debt for a long time which means they tend to stay with their parents longer and cannot afford new cars or even new houses which delays marriage or start having a family. Uncertainty surrounding employment, income, and future stability most likely played a crucial role because when young adults are unable to predict regarding their employment or financial stability, their future may appear threatening and unable to control. When young adults are unable to predict regarding their employment or financial stability, their future may appear threatening and unable to control. Emotional distress patterns established during young adult years tend to remain stable across developmental periods which indicates that mental health challenges arising from financial stress can persist into adulthood if they’re left unaddressed. Physical health patterns correlated to early financial stress as a youth can carry forward in ways that increase long term health risks. These findings illustrate how financial stress experienced in childhood and adolescence can become biological and produce combined mental and physical health effects that can follow into adulthood.

Conclusion

This review found that higher levels of financial anxiety are significantly associated with anxiety and depressive symptoms among young adults. Lower income is also associated with elevated stress, anxiety, and poor mental health. Beyond psychological effects, financial stress can contribute to long-term health issues such as elevated BMI and hypertension. Overall, financial anxiety affects both mental and physical wellbeing, placing young adults experiencing significant financial stress at greater risk for long term health challenges. Future research should use longitudinal designs and standardized measurements across diverse demographic groups.

References

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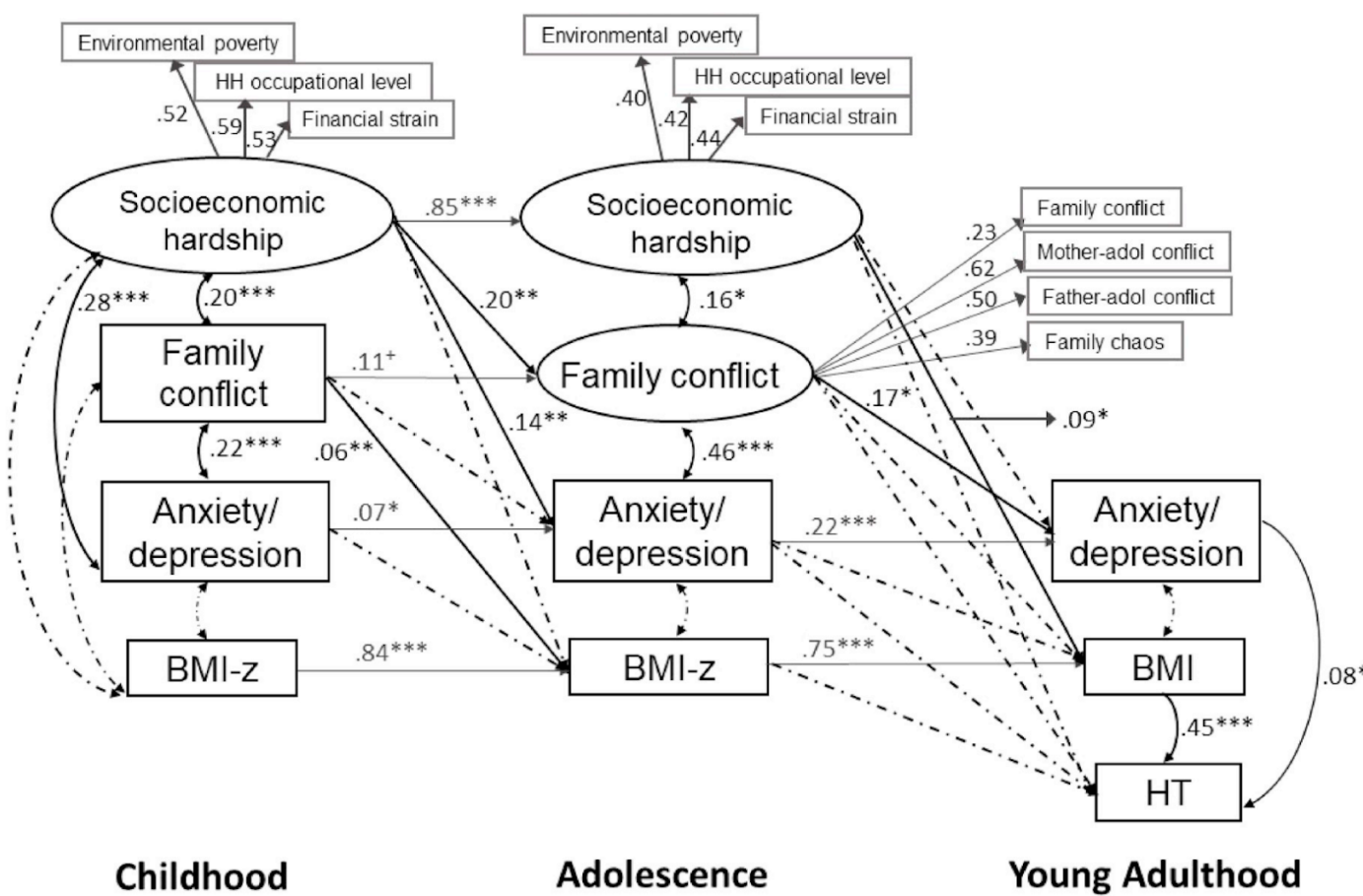
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remaining references on research paper



Young adults’ anxiety and depression, overall and by key demographics

