



NEWS

News items should be sent to *The Psychologist* on psychologist@bps.org.uk or at the Leicester office. We also welcome lively, informative and evidence-based analysis of current events (up to 1500 words) – contact the editor first on jonsut@bps.org.uk. Send reviews of research published in peer-reviewed journals (up to 400 words) to Tom Stafford on tom@idiolect.org.uk.

BPS speaks out on torture

EPA/EMPICS

THE Society has made a declaration on torture, which will be released at a special inaugural meeting at the Annual Conference on psychology and human rights.

Professor Peter Kinderman, Chair of the Division of Clinical Psychology, said: 'This is the first such statement made by the BPS. It is very similar, however, to statements made by sister organisations around the world. This is part of a wider human rights strand – exemplified by the inaugural meeting and reflected in our consultation on a range of bills and policies. The statement shows that psychologists can take a public stand on matters of political importance without sacrificing their independence and "learned society" status.'

WEBSITES

edr.org.uk

For professionals interested in eating disorders – news, research, conferences, etc.

www.psychjokes.com

Some attempts at humour

If you come across a website that you think would be of interest to our readers, let us know on psychologist@bps.org.uk.

STOP PRESS

The public consultation document concerning the statutory regulation of psychologists is now out. See www.hpc-uk.org, and p.238 for some frequently asked questions.

Declaration by The British Psychological Society concerning torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment

The British Psychological Society regretfully notes that the existence of state-sponsored torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment has been documented in many nations around the world. We note that torture victims may suffer from long-term multiple psychological and physical problems.

The British Psychological Society condemns torture wherever it occurs, and supports the United Nations Declaration and Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. We further condemn the misuse of psychological knowledge and techniques in the design and enactment of torture.

For the purpose of this Declaration, torture is defined as the deliberate, systematic or wanton infliction of physical or mental suffering by one or more persons acting alone or on the orders of any authority, to force another person to yield information, to make a confession, or for any other reason. This definition includes the use of threats, insults, sexual, religious or cultural degradation or degrading treatment of any kind.

DECLARATION

Psychologists shall at all times comply with the standards set out in the British Psychological Society's Code of Conduct for Psychologists.

Psychologists must ensure that they can discharge their duty of care and exercise independent professional judgement concerning any person for whom they are responsible.

Psychologists shall not countenance, condone or participate in the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading procedures, whatever the offence of which the victim of such procedures is suspected, accused or guilty, and whatever the victim's beliefs or motives, and in all situations, including armed conflict and civil strife.

Psychologists shall not knowingly provide any premises, instruments, substances or knowledge that facilitates the practice of torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or that diminishes the ability of the victim to resist such treatment.

Psychologists shall not be present during any procedure during which torture or other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment is used or threatened.

NICE guidelines criticised

AN editorial appearing in the 5 February issue of the *British Medical Journal* (bmj.com) has criticised new NICE guidelines for the treatment of depression (tinyurl.com/3pz8n), published in December. These state that antidepressants should not be prescribed for mild depression, but that psychological treatment should be considered instead. 'CBT is the psychological treatment of choice,' the guidelines say.

But in the editorial, Hugh Middleton and others argue that because the guidelines' diagnostic categories (mild, moderate, severe, etc.) are based on ICD-10 definitions then 'the decision to use or not use an antidepressant or pursue psychological therapy will be based on uncertain criteria such as the number of reported symptoms'.

They also question the evidence base for psychological treatments: 'The systematic

review on which the guidelines are based identifies evidence supporting problem solving therapies and counselling, but evidence on other interventions is weak or absent.'

Middleton and his co-authors Ian Shaw, Sally Hull and Gene Feder also point to the issue of whether mild depression should be viewed as a medical condition in the first place. '[Mild to moderate depressions] are mostly sub-threshold disorders where identifying the presenting difficulty as a treatable pathology may be inappropriate... professionals providing support are increasingly obliged to restrict interventions to those with evidence of effectiveness. On the whole these are limited to those evaluated from a medical perspective.'

'The medicalisation of unhappiness would benefit from sociological as well as clinical research,' they conclude.

Rich not happy

AS a country we're growing ever richer, but instead of it making us happier, we seem to be getting more and more miserable. So while the UK's economic output has doubled in the last 30 years, prescription rates for antidepressants have exploded and one in six of us experiences mental health problems. Indeed, according to Nic Marks and Hetan Shah of the New Economics Foundation (NEF), Western governments should stop using economic growth as the measure of a nation's prosperity and should focus instead on raising levels of well-being and quality of life.

Nic Marks, head of well-being research at NEF, said: 'In Britain we work too many hours to try and buy our way out of the unhappiness that having no time to spend with our families and friends, or do the things we love, brings us. This is no economic miracle, it's a grinding treadmill.'

JESS HURD/REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Marks and Shah's specific recommendations, which appear in the January issue of the *Journal of Mental Health Promotion* as a 'well-being manifesto', include the introduction of a tax-free citizen's income payable to all (see www.citizensincome.org); increasing taxation on 'environmental bads' like fossil fuels; introducing a maximum 35-hour working week;

broadening the school curriculum; broadening the focus of the NHS to include the social and psychological aspects of health; extending parental leave to the first two years of a child's life, and banning advertising aimed at under-eights.

'Psychologists too need to think beyond their models of individual (mainly ill) health towards a more positive psychology of human flourishing which recognises both the individual and their social, economic and environmental contexts', Marks told *The Psychologist*. 'NEF's well-being manifesto is partly a call to policy makers, economists and psychologists to start working together to create a flourishing society.'

□ *NEF*: www.neweconomics.org; *the well-being manifesto*: tinyurl.com/4g59y; *Journal of Mental Health Promotion* (tinyurl.com/4kkwf); and *the Mental Health Foundation* (www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

END OF MMR DEBATE?

A NEW study of more than 30,000 children in Japan may have finally settled the debate over whether the MMR vaccine is behind the apparent rise in autism.

Society member Professor Sir Michael Rutter, who was involved in the study (see tinyurl.com/3n728), told us: 'I hope that parents and pressure groups accept the message and move on to factors more worthy of attention.'

The study showed that cases of autism in Yokohama continued to rise after the triple vaccine was withdrawn. However, Professor Rutter concedes that the MMR vaccine 'may nevertheless be responsible for a small number of cases in especially vulnerable children', just as there is no general relationship between nuts and allergies but some children can have a severe reaction.

'Fortunately, with nuts you can do tests looking at skin responses – but no similar test has been put forward with MMR. Until we have evidence that there are children with this susceptibility, it is just an after the fact explanation – and they don't really get us anywhere.'

Unfortunately, Professor Rutter is not confident that the message of the 'resoundingly negative' finding will get through. 'People have a profound mistrust of government statements, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to convince the general public that we are conducting completely independent, academic research.'

DEADLINE

We welcome news items from members for possible publication, and reviews of new research; deadline for the June issue is **29 April**

Helping the tsunami survivors

AFTER the Indian Ocean tsunami devastated Thailand's west coast, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office asked the British Red Cross to help support the thousands of British citizens in Thailand affected by the disaster. *The Psychologist* spoke to BPS member, clinical psychologist and Red Cross volunteer Dr Sarah Davidson, among the first to arrive in Bangkok.

Davidson was initially accompanied by Pamela Hussein, a Red Cross expert in reuniting people separated through disaster and conflict; but the pair were soon joined by Red Cross volunteers Stephen Regel, Arlene Healey, Frank Ryding and Marilyn Hahn.

'The first thing we did was liaise with the British Embassy to establish our terms of reference. Then we headed straight for Phuket – one of the worst affected regions. For the first couple of days we drove around different sites to establish who needed help most urgently,' Davidson said.

Most in need were hundreds of British hospital patients, some of whom had suffered ghastly injuries and were exhibiting fear of water and furniture. Many described the tsunami as like being in a 'washing machine'.

The British Red Cross also helped the family and friends of people missing or dead. 'We gave people space to reflect and information about coping. We aimed to empower the family and warn them about their needs at the time and in the future. And when it was thought highly likely that missing relatives had died, but their body had not been recovered, we tried to help people grieve and explained alternative rituals,' Davidson

NANI AFRIDA/EPA

told us. 'These included laying flowers, visiting the site where their loved one was last seen or throwing flowers or similar into the sea.'

Also at critical psychological risk were the British Embassy staff who were working tirelessly to help UK citizens. 'Although highly skilled, the Embassy staff could not possibly have been prepared for the unprecedented nightmare unfolding before them,' Davidson said. 'We taught them basic psychological first aid and gave them as much advice and support as we could.'

Other people needing psychological help were 'converging volunteers', hundreds of Brits just turning up and wanting to do anything they could to help. However, it seems they couldn't have known what they were letting themselves in for, as many were instructed to help with recovering and bagging bodies.

'We gave them space to think about what they were doing, and gave them exit strategies so that they knew they didn't have to continue if they didn't want to,' Davidson said.

But when the devastation was on such an unprecedented scale, how did Sarah Davidson and her colleagues know what to do, or where to start helping all these different people? 'I found myself drawing on the bread-and-butter skills of my work as a clinical psychologist,' Davidson explained. 'Informed by the literature and applying systemic skills, I tried to support people, to give them a focus and to let them know what to expect and what their needs will be.' Longer term, the team provided people with contacts for their local Red Cross and NHS services back in the UK, or if they were staying in Thailand, contacts for local Red Cross or Red

Crescent societies, and other available psychological services.

This is the first time the British Red Cross has liaised directly with the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office overseas. According to Davidson, who is also Vice-Chairman of the British Red Cross, the idea of establishing a dedicated pool of Red Cross volunteers 'on standby' who could provide psychological support for disasters overseas is now being considered. 'It is best if people register their availability, experience and skills in advance,' Davidson said, 'so that when something terrible does happen, we know who is available to help and what training and experience they have.'

□ *Like to volunteer? Interested psychologists with relevant skills should visit www.redcross.org.uk for further information.*

Why we don't publish

PHILIP MOORE reports on a paper examining what deters psychologists from writing.

SPECIAL journal editions, informal writing groups, and student objectives to publish work during clinical psychology training placement, are the methods advocated by Craig Newnes and Helen Jones (Shropshire County Primary Care Trust) to encourage more people to publish. In the latest of a series of related articles in *Clinical Psychology* (February 2005) the authors examine some reasons why clinical psychologists may not write for publication, dispelling myths along the way, and offering suggestions and encouragement to prospective authors.

Firstly, the idea that originality is paramount when editors accept work for publication is just not accurate. Reasonable efforts for the author to stay within journal guidelines, concerning style,

word length and so on, are emphasised as far more important factors. Sometimes people fear their words will be perceived as reflecting their personality somehow, therefore they omit work that does not have an original 'wow' factor. The truly remarkable is worth recording, but often the more ordinary topics and issues go undiscussed. The creation of the special 'short story' editions of *Clinical Psychology* hope to address this by encouraging new authors and clinicians who have previously strayed from the spotlight, to submit short articles that have something to say, but may struggle to fit the mould of a scientific paper. After all, no one in the profession is new to writing. Everyone has written in the context of report writings, essays and assignments, but

such academic writing can deny people the chance to express thought, by forcing people into silence unless they use hard and fast referencing.

Writing improves with practice, and this has been a key ethic of an informal writing class recently set up by the authors. People who attend are advised that they do not need to produce literary masterpieces, making their every word a jewel whilst seamlessly making sentences flow like poetry. If they could they would be a poet or writer, not a psychologist. Prospective authors should avoid looking for perfection from the outset, and instead focus on trial and error.

■ *Philip Moore is a primary care graduate mental health worker with North Devon Primary Care Trust.*

PREJUDICE NOT INEVITABLE

WE fear the unknown, and regrettably, in the case of racial groups different from our own, that can manifest as a form of prejudice. For example, research has shown that brain activity in the amygdala, an area responsible for recognising threat, dissipates when repeatedly viewing photographs of strangers from our own race, but is sustained when viewing photos of strangers from a different race. This and other findings raise the controversial possibility that racial prejudice might be 'hard wired' in the brain. Fortunately, new research by psychologists at Princeton University suggests this is not necessarily the case.

Mary Wheeler and Susan Fiske found that the amygdala of white participants only showed increased activity to photos of black faces vs. white faces, when they were asked to judge whether faces were aged over 21 years – a so-called social categorisation task. By contrast, when participants judged whether a dot was visible somewhere on each photo (a neutral, non-social task), or decided whether each person would like a certain vegetable (thereby viewing each face as a unique individual), the participants' amygdala activity was no different when viewing a black face or a white face.

Amygdala and stereotype activation only happened when 'thinking about the faces categorically and superficially', Fiske said. 'The results show that perceivers can change the social context in which they view a target person and thereby affect out-group perception.' The findings appear in the January issue of *Psychological Science*.

WANT TO LEARN HOW THE MEDIA WORKS?

The British Association Media Fellowship Scheme offers professional scientists and engineers the opportunity to experience first hand how the media works. You will spend three to eight weeks on a summer placement with a media organisation learning how science is reported in the media. Previous host organisations have included *The Guardian*, BBC Radio, *Nature* online and *Countryfile*.

You are eligible to apply for the scheme if you have a minimum of two years' postgraduate experience in your field, are a UK citizen, and work at any level in an academic or research institution, industry, civil service or any other similar organisation.

□ For further information and online application see www.the-ba.net/mediafellows. Deadline is 15 April.

STEFANO CAGNONI - REPORTDIGITAL.CO.UK

Making your mind up

YOUR job's on the line, your marriage is on the rocks – just how do people make decisions and weigh up risks in this ephemeral age of easy divorce and uncertain employment? Whether to get married, where to live, which job to take, whether to have sex...? A new five-year, £2.8 million research programme, funded by the ESRC, and involving researchers at 14 universities, hopes to delve deeper than ever into how we choose what to do (see www.kent.ac.uk/scarr).

Among the projects, a team led by Professor Jane Lewis (LSE) will interview 30 married and cohabiting couples and 50 teenagers and their parents, to find out how people make decisions about family life, including whether to get married, and how people

There are no clear rules about what kind of behaviour is acceptable in today's society

perceive sexual risk. Lewis said: 'People's lives have become much more messy – neither jobs nor marriages are for life. Nor are there any clear rules as to what kind of behaviour is acceptable. Policy makers express anxiety about family breakdown, and often hanker after the old certainties, but to date we know relatively little about the effect of all this change on the nation's households.'

At the University of East Anglia, Professor Graham Loomes aims to overcome the limitations of past investigations into decision making, which have tended to ask people to consider

particular risks in isolation, rather than against a backdrop of other concerns, as occurs in real life. 'Ask us in isolation how much we value clean air and we will say one thing, but pose the question in the context of more jobs, convenient transport or our children's health, and the response may be quite different.' Loomes explained. His team first intends to run a series of small experiments to 'give insights into the cognitive processes at work in decision making under risk, and to identify the appropriate vocabulary and mode of presentation to be used in interviews'. A larger-scale survey is then planned,

specifically aimed at uncovering how risks are perceived when hazards are considered separately or in various combinations. 'We hope that the results of our study will be of value to those planners and policy makers who want to improve our lives in areas including health care, transport, crime prevention and the environment,' Loomes said.

Meanwhile, Professor Nick Pidgeon, also at the University of East Anglia, heads a team planning to investigate how people evaluate environmental risk. Pidgeon's team will conduct interviews and focus groups among two Essex communities – one at Bradwell-on-Sea near a nuclear power station, another close to Stansted airport – and they hope to understand the decisions, values and assumptions of the people living there via the stories they tell. 'Ordinary people's accounts, in their own everyday language, are an essential ingredient in the whole process of drawing up plans and making important environmental decisions,' Pidgeon said. 'A key aim of our project is to offer insight into how gathering the stories of people in this way can help in the deliberations between them and the authorities, and ultimately lead to decisions which are acceptable to all sectors of society.'

The overall research programme – 'Social contexts and responses to risk' (SCARR) – was launched at a conference in Canterbury at the end of January. A workshop on narrative and biographical methods is due to be held by the SCARR programme at the London School of Economics on 9 July.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

BPS member Dr Elvidina Adamson-Macedo, President of the Royal Society of Medicine's Forum on Maternity and the Newborn, will be delivering her Presidential Address 'Health psychology and frontiers of neonatology' at the Royal Society of Medicine on 28 April.

□ See www.rsm.ac.uk/maternity for details.

EASTERN EUROPE GROUP CONFERENCE

THE British and East European Psychology Group is holding its 2005 conference in Krakow, Poland, from 11 to 14 September. The conference theme is 'Research psychology in the new Europe'.

□ Contact Hilary Gray, Secretary of the BEEPG. Tel: 01629 822915; e-mail: hilarygray@btinternet.com.

EXAMINERS SOUGHT

High-quality examiners are crucial to the success of the GCSE and A-level system, and boards are currently recruiting for 2005.

A recent MORI survey found that more than eight out of ten examiners, moderators or markers said they were satisfied with the role and nearly nine out of ten would recommend it to colleagues. Both new and experienced psychology teachers say that examining is a key aspect of their professional development, and a good way to learn while earning.

□ See www.examinerrecruitment.org for details.

Primates may hold clues to autism and unfairness

MONKEYS will sacrifice juice rewards to look at an image of a higher-ranking monkey or a female's hindquarters, neurobiologists at Duke University Medical Center have found. 'Our approach, in which we ask the monkeys to, in a sense, put a number on how much juice they'd be willing to spend to see a particular individual, gives us an invaluable experimental system to explore the neural wiring that underlies social cognition,' said Michael Platt, co-author of the work.

The researchers, who believe that similar processes may underlie monkey and human social cognition, hope to shed light on how the brain's social machinery breaks down in autism. 'One of the main problems in people with autism is that they don't find it very motivating to look at other individuals,' Platt explained. 'What we have with these monkeys is an excellent model for how social motivation for looking is processed in normal individuals. We can then use

drugs that affect specific neural processes to explore whether we can mimic some of the deficits found in autism in these animals.' Their research will appear in the journal *Current Biology*.

In a separate development, researchers at the Yerkes National Primate Research Center have found that chimpanzees respond to

unfairness in a similar way to humans. Sarah Brosnan and her colleagues studied different groups of chimps – one had lived together all their lives, in some cases for more than 30 years; another group had lived together for less than eight years. Chimps from the group that hadn't been together that long, refused to exchange a token for cucumber when they saw that their partner was

receiving a better reward – grapes – for the same task. Chimps from the long-term close-knit group seemed to mind less, and were more likely to continue making the token exchange even if their partner was receiving a better treat.

'In the far older group, with its tightly knit social structure characterised by intense integration and social reciprocity, inequity caused barely a ripple,' the authors said. 'The short-term social group, by contrast, was still working out social issues four years after its formation.'

These observations 'may parallel human responses in close relationships...if so, tolerance of inequity may increase with social closeness between partners, such as friends and family, in a wide variety of species, a hypothesis that deserves further testing in humans and non-human primates', the researchers concluded. Their findings appear in the February issue of *Proceedings of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences*.

HISTORY FUNDING

THE Archives of the History of American Psychology have announced the 2005 Kantor Fellowship. Fellows are expected to utilise the resources of the Archives in support of a programme of research and scholarship in the history of psychology.

□ See www.uakron.edu/ahap for details. Deadline is 30 April.

PHOTOGRAPHIC AWARDS

THE 2005 Visions of Science Photographic Awards sponsored by Novartis and *The Daily Telegraph* are now open and accepting entries until 6 May.

□ For full details of the competition go to tinyurl.com/5hs14. (If you enter and you win – let us know!)

TECHNICAL STAFF CONFERENCE

TRINITY College Dublin will be the venue for this year's conference of the Association of Technical Staff in Psychology. It will be held from 22 to 24 June.

□ See tinyurl.com/5xcrv for more information.

GENDER RECOGNITION GUIDELINES

THE government's Gender Recognition Panel has published guidelines for medical practitioners and chartered psychologists, available to download via www.grp.gov.uk. Guidelines for applicants are also available.

DINE AND DEBATE

THE fragility of the human mind is to be examined in a new series of dinner-debates at the Science Museum's Dana Centre. Each evening will open with an introductory talk by the speaker, followed by a two-course meal with glass of wine or soft drink and then an open floor discussion. Topics in the series include sleep deprivation (19 April), stress (18 May) and criminal minds (15 June).

□ Tickets are £10. E-mail tickets@danacentre.org.uk or call 020 7942 4040.

BPS/British Academy lecture

CHILDREN in their very early years show skills of deception, comfort, and sharing a make-believe world within their close relationships at ages when they fail psychologists' standard assessments of mind reading. At a BPS/British Academy joint lecture Professor Judy Dunn (Kings College, London) will be asking: Why should this be? Why do some children grow up to be stars at reading other minds and emotions, and others have more difficulty? Where do language and communicative experiences fit in the developmental story? She will be looking at research that focuses on how children use

their cognitive skills within their different relationships – with parents, siblings and friends, highlighting what we can learn from a relationships approach to studying cognitive development.

The lecture, 'Relationships and children's discovery of the mind', is sponsored by the BPS under its Public Engagement programme (see the advertisement about funding on p.186). It will be given at 5.30pm on Tuesday 5 April 2005 at the British Academy in London. Admission is free.

□ For further information see tinyurl.com/5534q or call the British Academy on 020 7969 5246.

NICE GUIDELINES ON VIOLENT BEHAVIOUR

THE National Institute for Clinical Excellence has produced guidelines on the short-term management (72 hours) of disturbed/violent behaviour in adult psychiatric settings and in service users attending emergency departments for mental health assessments. The report covers topics including prediction (antecedents, warning signs and risk assessment), training, service user perspectives, de-escalation techniques, physical intervention, and post-incident reviews.

□ See tinyurl.com/55of2.

JOINED-UP TEXTING

THE Nestlé Social Research Programme has produced its third report – *Joined-up Texting* – on mobile phone usage among young people. One of the most striking findings reported is that texting is the most common use of the mobile phone among under 21-year-olds. Psychologist Helen Haste (University of Bath) is Director of Research for the Programme.

□ For more information and a downloadable copy of the report, go to www.spreckley.co.uk/nestle/pr03.htm.

PSYCHOLOGY AND THE GENERAL ELECTION

THE BPS is linking up with the Dana Centre at the Science Museum, London, for two events around the expected time of the General Election. The first, on 3 May, will look at voting – how we are influenced by the polls, the media and the policies. The second event will be on 10 May and will examine leadership: What does it take to lead a political party, and how are we influenced by the figurehead?

□ Full details of the events can be found at www.danacentre.org.uk.

Unhappy with job lot

JOB satisfaction in Britain tumbled during the 1990s because people were working harder than they wanted to, and because they weren't given enough freedom to use their own initiative at work. That's the message from an analysis by Professor Francis Green (University of Kent) of several large-scale surveys, including the British Household Panel Study, the Employment in Britain Survey and the 2001 Skills Survey.

'In Britain, all of the fall in overall job satisfaction between 1992 and 2001 could be accounted for by people having less personal responsibility and use of initiative in their work, combined with an increase in the effort required,' Professor

PAUL BOX (REPORT@DIGITAL.CO.UK)

Green said in their end of study report for the ESRC.

Contrary to popular opinion, lower job satisfaction

in recent years has not been caused by rising job insecurity – 'It was implausible to blame job security,' Green said, 'because over this period [1992 to 2001] unemployment had fallen and other evidence suggested a falling sense of insecurity during the latter part of the 1990s.'

Professor Green and collaborator Nicholas Tsitsianis say more research is needed to uncover the reasons why people have less opportunity to use their own initiative in the modern workplace, and why work intensity has increased. 'In our view, the domain of work is extraordinarily under-researched, considering the importance that this has for most people's lives.'

Single mums, job stability and adolescent children

A NEW American study, published in the journal *Child Development* (see www.srcd.org), suggests policy makers should focus on ensuring mothers have job stability, because not to do so could be harmful to their teenage children.

For two years in the late 1990s Ariel Kalil and Kathleen Ziol-Guest at the University of Chicago followed 530 single mothers and their 572 adolescent children, who were aged between 14 and 16 years at the study start.

The researchers found that the children of mothers who lost their job and didn't find a replacement within the two-year study period, had lower self-esteem, had less confidence in their ability to solve their problems, and were more likely to drop out of school than the children of mothers who were continuously employed at a reasonable wage (i.e. more than \$7/hour in 1999 terms).

PAUL BOX (REPORT@DIGITAL.CO.UK)

Ensuring that single mothers have job stability is good for the performance of their adolescent children at school

Teenagers whose mothers were continuously employed at an unreasonable wage (i.e. less than \$7/hour in 1999 terms) were more likely to have to retake the same grade at school. Finally, the children of mothers who were continuously unemployed during the study period were more likely to drop out of school than those children whose mothers were continuously employed. The researchers found no evidence that loss of income explained these effects.

Lead researcher Ariel Kalil said that more research is needed to understand why teenagers were affected in this way by their mothers' employment, citing family stress and a mother's influence as a role model, as a possible factors. 'The results from this study point to the importance of not only helping single mothers keep jobs once they find them but also providing the economic supports to make these jobs as much like higher-wage ones as possible,' Kalil said.