

Adolescent Development Lab

Newsletter Summer 2020

Hello! Welcome to the Adolescent Lab Newsletter. While the world around us seems to be changed drastically by pandemic, our research continues to move forward. Within our newsletter, you will find information regarding our lab, our research projects, and our lab members.

Our Lab



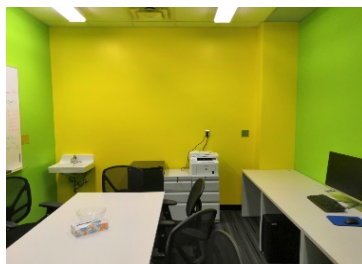
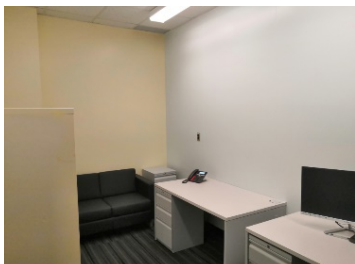
The Adolescent Development Lab, led by Dr. Yao Zheng, studies psychological, social, emotional, and behavioral development during adolescence.

In our lab, we examine multiple factors that influence adolescent development, such as family and peer influences, as well as genetic and environmental interaction, in various contexts (e.g., school, neighbourhood, culture). The ultimate goal of our research is to promote child and adolescent physical and mental health and well-being.

Dr. Yao Zheng



Dr. Yao Zheng is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at the University of Alberta in the Developmental Science area. He completed his Ph.D. in Human Development and Family Studies at Pennsylvania State University, as well as a degree of Master in Applied Statistics. He was a visiting graduate student at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, Germany (Center for



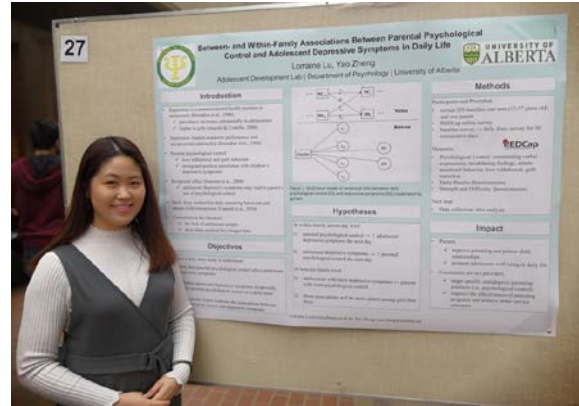
Applied Developmental Science) and King's College London, UK (Social, Genetic & Developmental Psychiatry Centre). He further received postdoctoral training in developmental psychopathology and quantitative genetics in Simon Fraser University, Vancouver (Institute for the Reduction of Youth Violence) and Université du Québec à Montréal, Montréal (Groupe de recherche sur l'inadaptation psychosociale chez l'enfant [GRIP]). Dr. Zheng received his BS in Psychology from Yuan Pei Honors College, Peking University.

Currently, Dr. Zheng is leading three research projects: The Parent-Teen Daily Diary Study, College Daily Life Study, and Chinese Adolescent Risky Behaviors meta-analysis.

Research Projects

Parent-Teen Daily Diary Study

The development of adolescents occurs on a day-to-day basis as a result of their interactions with parents and peers, as well as their engagement in various activities. The Parent-Teen Daily Diary Study is a longitudinal project that examines the relationships between parenting and adolescent development on a daily level. Participants of this study include parent-youth (aged 12–17) dyads residing in Alberta. Currently, we have recruited more than 100 families, and recruitment will continue throughout 2020. Parent-youth pairs first complete a baseline survey and then answer a series of questions each night about their daily experiences, activities, and feelings consecutively for a month. We currently have three honors students (Anastasia, Min, and Lorraine) working on this project.



[Lorraine presenting *Between- and within-family associations between parental psychological control and adolescent depressive symptoms in daily life* at the Royce-Harder conference in April 2019]

College Daily Life

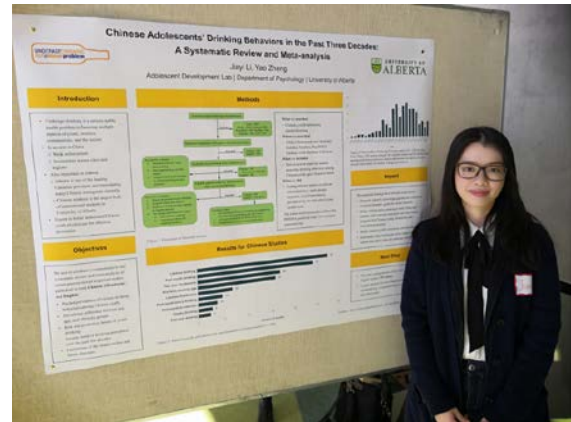
Entrance into university can be a tough transition for many young adults, as they face shifts in factors such as friend groups, living arrangements, and stress levels. The College Daily Life Study is a longitudinal project that examines the links between social-emotional development in first-year post-secondary students' daily lives, and how these links are influenced by their everyday experiences and activities. The study follows both domestic and international students for 30 days using a daily-diary design. Participants answer a questionnaire at the end of each day regarding emotional well-being, leisure activities, academic stress, acculturative stress, and social support. Currently, we have recruited 313 participants, composed of approximately 230 domestic students and 80 international students. We will recruit more international students in the coming 2020 Fall semester. Currently, we have three honor students (Jerry, Mike, & Shannon) working on this project.

Chinese Adolescent Risky Behaviors

Underage substance abuse (e.g., drinking and smoking) is a serious public health problem, as it can influence multiple aspects of youths' families, communities, and society. Chinese youth make up a significant proportion of the world's young population, and more research is needed to better understand the development and trend of problem behaviors in this population. Three systematic reviews and meta-analyses are currently being conducted, which focus on Chinese youths' drinking, smoking, and risky sexual behaviors, respectively. These projects aim to assess the overall prevalence, secular trends, group differences, and risk and protective factors of these behaviors. These projects are conducted by Zhidi Chen, Jialuo Jiang, Jiayi Li, Emily Liu, Ruiqi Liu, Xinyi Liu, Yuhan Pei, Yijun Wang, Kathy Zou, and Tianyu Zhu (ordered by last names) under Dr. Zheng's supervision.

As for now, the systematic review of the Alcohol Project and Tobacco Project has been completed! For the Alcohol project, 186 papers were eligible for the meta-analysis. Nine measurements were identified, such as lifetime drinking, past month drunkenness, and first-time drinking before age 13. For the Tobacco project, 252 papers were eligible for the meta-analysis. Seven measurements were most frequently used across these eligible papers, such as lifetime smoking, past month smoking, and first-time smoking before age 13. The next step for the Alcohol Project and Tobacco Project is to perform a meta-analysis to obtain the overall prevalence of different drinking and smoking behaviors. For the Risky Sexual Behaviors Project, 706 results have been identified as eligible for information extraction. The extraction has been done, and the identification of the most frequently used measurements is still in process; once completed, a meta-analysis on the prevalence of

Chinese youths' risky sexual behaviors will be conducted.



[Jiayi presenting *Chinese adolescents' drinking behaviours in the past three Decades: A systematic review and meta-analysis* at the FURCA conference in March 2019]



[Gin presenting *Chinese youth smoking in the past three decades: A systematic literature review* at the FURCA conference in March 2020]

Lab Members



Jingyi Zhang is a first-year graduate student in our lab. Jingyi obtained a BS degree in Applied Psychology in her hometown Qingdao, China, and an MA degree in Psychology in Los Angeles. Working with children, specifically aged 6–18, motivates her to study how inner and social factors influence their developmental trajectories. Jingyi aims to provide constructive suggestions to the children and their parents to promote children's well-being. Further, benefiting from travelling, she has interacted with numerous international people and experienced colorful cultures, which strengthened her research interests in multicultural competence and intercultural communication. At leisure, Jingyi enjoys going to museums, hiking, and camping; she also designs and handcrafts porcelain.

Currently, Jingyi is assisting Dr. Zheng in the College Daily Life project. Her role in the project is to examine how daily experiences influence undergraduate students' school adaptation, psychosomatic health, and subjective well-being. Jingyi's research not only observes the university transition of domestic students but also pays special attention to international students' acculturation processes. For first-year undergraduate students, transitioning from high school to university represents multiple changes in life, and these

transitions can be stressful. Jingyi's research aims to identify risk factors that impact undergraduate students' psychosocial health and to further examine how coping strategies may affect a student's daily functioning. Moreover, for international students, Jingyi primarily examines the buffering role of coping strategies in the relationship between acculturative stress and psychosomatic problems. The implications of this research could facilitate university policymakers to provide supportive solutions to organize diverse leisure activities, to create a multicultural-friendly environment for our university, and thus protect students from psychological distress and promote their subjective well-being.



Lorraine Lu just completed a Psychology BA Honors this Spring. Coming from Hong Kong, Lorraine has lived in YEG for six years. She has been working with Dr. Zheng for two years and was the first honors student under his supervision. Lorraine's

research interests are on adolescence development and mental health, especially depression. In addition, her hobbies include cooking and watching Netflix.

Lorraine's honor thesis examined the daily associations between parental psychological control and adolescent's depressive symptoms. Due to the rising prevalence and long-term adverse impact of depression on adolescent development, she is interested in understanding the underlying factors behind depression. Previous studies have consistently found that children report high levels of depressive symptoms when their parents use more psychological control. Parental psychological control refers to

parents' attempts to intrude into the psychological and emotional development of their child (e.g., withdrawing love and guilt induction). Because both adolescent depressive symptoms and parenting practices happen on a day-to-day basis, Lorraine's study investigates them on a level that can generalize to adolescents' and Canadian families' daily lives. Specifically, she wants to know 1) how parental psychological control influences adolescent depressive symptoms, and 2) whether adolescent depressive symptoms reciprocally influence parental psychological control, on a daily basis.



Jiayi Li is from Guangdong, China. She just completed a BA in Psychology with a Sociology minor this Spring, and finds interest in the ecological influences (e.g., family, peer, school) on child and youth development. This

drove her to join our Lab. Future research taken on by Jiayi will center around bullying, peer victimization, and rebuilding healthy peer relationships during her graduate studies. In Jiayi's leisure time, she enjoys swimming, building with Lego, and exploring new restaurants and museums.

Jiayi has worked in our lab for over two years as an independent study student. She has been responsible for a systematic review and meta-analysis project on Chinese adolescents' drinking behaviors in the past three decades. She has also collaborated with the other two literature review teams to conduct similar projects on Chinese adolescents' smoking and risky sexual behaviors. In this study, we aim to assess the overall prevalence, its potential differences by sex

and school and the secular trend of Chinese adolescents' problem behaviors. Currently, Jiayi is working on a literature review on scales that assess youths' impulsivity, sensation seeking, risk-taking, and emotion regulation to develop new scales that are developmental and context-sensitive.



Jialuo (Gin) Jiang is in her fourth year at the University of Alberta. She is studying Psychology as a major in BA with a BSc mathematics minor. Gin's future career interest is clinical psychology, especially in the area of counseling, which will allow her to analyze clients' life changes and work to prevent and treat people's stressful experiences. Joining the lab gave Gin an excellent opportunity to gain a more comprehensive understanding of young adolescents' dynamic inner world; this provided Gin with clarity in determining her future client group. During her free time, Gin enjoys reading Whodunit, watching horror films, jogging outdoors, and doing jigsaw puzzles. A 1000-piece jigsaw puzzle used to keep her absorbed for hours, but these days they prove less difficult. Well, 2000 pieces? She accepts the challenge!

Gin has taken three independent study courses with Dr. Zheng since joining our lab. She works on reviewing literature related to Chinese youths' tobacco use and risky sexual behaviors. Extracting relevant data from previous studies and identifying top measures for later meta-analysis have been Gin's

primary jobs. In this 2020 winter term, Gin wrote reports for both the Tobacco project and Risky Sexual Behavior project and presented her findings for the Tobacco project at the Festival of Undergraduate Research & Creative Activities (FURCA) conference (03-11-2020). Gin views her chance to engage in the FURCA conference as an inspiring adventure and enjoyed sharing her ideas and findings with her fellow academics on such an important occasion.



Shannon Lohner is a 3rd year BSc Psychology honors student in our Lab. She is from Camrose, Alberta, and is in her first year of working under the supervision of Dr. Zheng on the University Daily Life Project. Aside from her

work in research, Shannon is very heavily involved on campus through her positions with UAlberta Residence Services as a Resident Assistant, as well as her role as a UAlberta Ambassador. Her work as a resident assistant complements the research in our lab, as both of them involve working with first-year university students. Outside of these roles, Shannon most enjoys plants and gardening; she has her own collection of 23 houseplants (which is ever-growing) and is excited to grow a garden this summer. Shannon also enjoys exploring new restaurants throughout Edmonton with her friends.

Shannon's research specifically focuses on the daily experiences of first-year international and domestic students. Throughout the first semester of university, students experience many changes as they transition

to the more self-directed education of university compared to the structured nature of the high school. University students are known to experience high levels of academic stress, and such high levels of academic stress can have negative short- and long-term impacts, such as depressive symptoms and disturbed sleep. Shannon's project focuses on how academic stress, emotions, and leisure activities of students vary from day to day, and what the potential implications of their variation might be. Additionally, she will examine the coping styles students use to deal with academic stress; some can be beneficial (e.g., engaging in leisure activities), while others can be ineffective (e.g. avoidance).



Anastasia Ambrose is in her third year of a BSc in Honors Psychology and has been active in our lab for one year. Anastasia grew up in Spruce Grove, Alberta, as well as on her family farm in Lake Isle, Alberta. Growing up on her family farm gave Anastasia a passion and appreciation for agriculture, and she continues to work alongside her family to create a sustainable and successful farm. In her free time, Anastasia enjoys camping, gardening, and bowling, while in the colder months, she especially

appreciates curling up with a good book. Once entering university, Anastasia has become involved in her university and community through volunteerism, and currently works as a volunteer at the Edmonton Cross Cancer Institute. She is also an active member of the University's Agriculture club and is now the club coordinator of women's sports. She aspires to be pursuing graduate studies in Clinical Psychology and potentially exploring the area of public health in the future.

Anastasia is working alongside Dr. Zheng in the Parent-Teen study and aims to examine the reciprocal relationships between parenting behaviors and adolescent callous-unemotional (CU) traits in daily life. CU traits distinguish a particularly aggressive, treatment-resistant subgroup of youth, characterized by a flat affect, a lack of interest in their achievement, and a lack of compassion and remorse. The association between parenting behaviors and CU traits is unclear, though positive and negative parenting appear to play a role in the development of CU traits. Evidence suggests that parental warmth could reduce CU traits over time, and inversely, negative parenting practices could increase CU trait over time, though this relationship is inconsistent. Anastasia expects that daily positive parenting, as well as greater parent-child relationship quality, will negatively predict daily CU trait levels, while daily negative parenting will positively predict daily CU trait levels.



Minyeong (Min) Cho is a 3rd-year BA Psychology Honors student under the supervision of Dr. Zheng. Min is particularly interested in research regarding children/adolescents with attentional difficulties and/or hyperactivity, impulsivity, and emotion regulation development in relation to interactions with their caregivers. She has research experience working with children with ADHD and hopes to continue studying ADHD in her graduate studies. She has presented her projects about positive illusory bias among children with ADHD at the Royce-Harder conference, the rates of ADHD treatments, including medications in psychosocial therapies in Alberta at the FURCA conference, and the associations between helpless attributional style with depression/anxiety disorders at the virtual CPA 2020 conference this summer.

As a part of the Parent-Teen study, Minyeong's honours thesis focuses on parental emotion socialization and adolescent emotion regulation and their relation to daily negative experiences as well as adolescents' own emotions. Besides, she is exploring emotion regulation as a moderator between negative emotions and daily hassles. Emotion regulation is a dynamic regulatory process of emotion, while

parental emotion socialization is the process parents engage in by responding to or communicating about emotion with their children. Existing research has suggested that parental emotion socialization of negative emotions affects children's future development of emotion regulation. However, there is a limited amount of existing research regarding the effects of specific emotion regulation strategies, particularly among adolescents.



[Lab members having a pizza party at the end of the year, 2019 Fall]



Yiqun (Jerry) Wu is a second-year BSc psychology specialization student who has spent half of his adolescent years in an eastern country and a half in a western country. As a result of his travels, Jerry is especially fascinated by cultural interactions. His interest complements the College Daily Life Project, as the study involves cross-cultural comparisons regarding acculturation and daily inter-ethnic contact. In his research project, he aims to investigate the role of daily inter-ethnic contact in shaping the acculturation process, and how the acculturation outcome would, in turn, promote or hinder ethnic contact, with the focus on international students' acculturation towards mainstream Canadian culture. He also examines how various other factors, notably personality and discrimination, would mediate this process. Currently, Jerry is participating in various tasks as a volunteer in our lab; in doing so, he is familiarizing himself with scientific research. After graduation, Jerry hopes to stay in Canada and to pursue a career related to counselling psychology. When Jerry is not partaking in his many academic interests, Jerry enjoys watching movies and playing board games.

The Upcoming Year

As the 2019-2020 academic year comes to an end, our lab looks forward to advancing our current projects, as well as introducing new members and studies. The Parent-Teen study and the University Daily Life study will continue to recruit participants in the fall semester. The Adolescent Risky Behaviors meta-analysis will conclude by the end of this summer. Furthermore, our lab welcomes four new members in the fall of 2020: two new undergraduate honors students, Jerry and Mike, as well as two new graduate students, Ben and Zach.



Mike Zhang is entering his third year of university and was recently accepted into the BSc in honors psychology program. As a second-generation Canadian, and being part of a culturally diverse friend group, Mike has developed a keen interest in how cultural differences impact close relationships. Drawing from his own observations of how intimate relationships can be a tremendous source of both stress and stress-relief, he has further narrowed down his research interests to the impact cultural differences have on intimate relationships, and how this impact may further influence college students' psychosocial adjustment. Specifically, he will examine the different impact that stressors can have on those in a relationship and those not, and how this impacts adjustment (as measured by levels of anxiety and depression). Further, for those in a relationship, does being in a high-conflict relationship improve adjustment or make it worse compared to single students? These interests mesh well with the University Daily Life Project, and he looks forward to exploring what the study uncovers.

Recently, Mike has done some work in our lab and hopes to continue working with Dr. Zheng and the lab in the coming years. Through both course work and working with the lab, he is honing his research skills

in the field of psychology. In the future, he hopes to either continue researching human intimacy and its interaction with psychopathology, or work with law enforcement agencies, either assisting their approach to family/youth conflict or in a more investigative role. In his spare time, Mike enjoys playing indie games (his current favorite being Hollow Knight) and is trying to get back into playing the piano.

Graduating Members

As we gain new members, we must also say goodbye to our graduating members Lorraine and Jiayi. Lorraine and Jiayi have contributed tremendously to our lab with their impressive dedication, commitment, and passion for our research. Lorraine will be pursuing a master's degree in public health at Western University starting this Fall. She sees herself in youth program planning and implementation in the future. Jiayi will be pursuing a master's degree in Child and Youth Studies at Brock University starting this Fall. Her career goal is to be an intervention researcher or program evaluator. We can't wait to see what the future holds for them and wish them the best in their journey towards their aspirations!

We look forward to the upcoming school year, and hope you take an interest in our research! We have a few amazing research projects that are scheduled to unfold in this coming academic year. For any further information about our studies, please contact adlab@alberta.ca. We thank you all for your contributions to our research projects thus far. We could not have done it without your help! Please take care of yourself and your families at this particular time of the pandemic.

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT LAB

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