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Poverty: The Risk to Children's Mental Health

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This paper assesses recent data on the prevalence of poverty among children and young people diagnosed with mental health problems. The paper will demonstrate that the current hierarchy of risk factors for developing mental health problems needs adjusting to place poverty among the highest risk factors. Globally poverty is calculated to keep rising especially among less developed countries, and the post-Covid 19 economic recession in developed countries is set to rise. The experience of young people enduring Pandemic isolation is already being quantified and is expected to increase referrals for specialist intervention. Searches on several medical/psychological/social databases using keywords: poverty, children, mental illness were undertaken between 2018 and 2021. According to Unicef more than 700 million people still live in extreme poverty, half of whom are children. Children are disproportionately affected. Despite comprising one third of the global population, they represent half of those struggling to survive on less than \$1.90 a day. Across the world, about 1 billion children are multidimensionally poor, lacking necessities as basic as nutrition or clean water. Some 150 million additional children have been plunged into multidimensional poverty due to COVID-19. This research demonstrates that there is a strong association between families' socio-economic circumstances and the chances that their children will experience mental illness. Evidence of this association is found repeatedly across developed countries. The paper will conclude by arguing that psychologists, psychiatrists, psychotherapists, social workers and CAMHS specialists need to place more importance on this critical socio-economic variable when assessing referred children and also advocate for political priorities in governments to reduce poverty and lower the risk of childhood mental illness.

Biography

Steven graduated from the London School of Economics in 1985 with an MSc in Social Policy and Social Work. He qualified as a psychotherapist in 1991 and gained his MPhil in 2008. Steven has published 14 text books, 50 scientific papers in International peer-reviewed journals and presented his research at 15 International Conferences.

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