Psychology Colloquium/ Honours Advanced Seminar

The Influence of Executive Function on Externalising and Internalising Problem Behaviours in Middle Childhood

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3:30 pm, Friday, 21st May 2010
MLG 13, Lower Ground Floor, M Block (Coffs Harbour)
Video-conferenced to Lecture Hall P158 (Lismore)

All welcome to attend

The development of social competence in children has been tied to the cognitive processes involved in executive function. Studies have found that through normal behavioural development a child begins to acquire skills which help them regulate emotions and subsequently control behavioural responses. However, deficits in executive functioning, such as poor self-regulation skills, and social information processing (SIP) biases, interfere with the development of appropriate social, cognitive, and emotional behaviour. The examination of SIP has been instrumental in understanding the development of social adjustment and competence amongst children. If one's social information processing is intact, the individual will exhibit social competence; however, if any stage of information processing is biased or deficient, behaviour becomes less socially appropriate. Self-regulation is another vital component in the development of socially competent behaviour. Research suggests that as children develop, they move from more reactive behaviour to more regulated behaviour. However, executive dysfunction can interrupt the progression of this normal development and negatively affect a child's social competence. The aim of the proposed research is therefore to investigate whether the behavioural problems of children, as identified by teachers and parents, can be explained by deficits in executive functioning, specifically, SIP and self-regulation. Through the provision of a more comprehensive assessment of children, both at risk for academic and social problems and those not deemed at risk, more efficient and effective interventions may be developed.

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