

Mental health issues affect most of us, eventually

A study from the Dunedin Birth Cohort found that 86% of participants had an episode of ‘diagnosable’ psychopathology.¹ This is being found in other birth cohort studies, and in cross-sectional studies, participants have much recall failure about past events. This is not pathologizing human experience but confirming that mental health problems are like physical health problems, the unavoidable consequences of the wear and tear of normal life.

The authors suggest that it may be time to adopt a life-course perspective on mental disorders. They also suggest further investigation “to assess an individual’s life-course vulnerability to psychopathology, identify causes of this vulnerability, explain why this vulnerability manifests in different diagnoses at different points in the life course, and develop transdiagnostic preventions”.

This Gem is approved by Prof Reremoana Theodore, Director of the Dunedin Multidisciplinary Health and Development Study.

Reference:

1. [Longitudinal Assessment of Mental Health Disorders and Comorbidities Across 4 Decades Among Participants in the Dunedin Birth Cohort Study](#)
JAMA Netw Open. (2020)

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