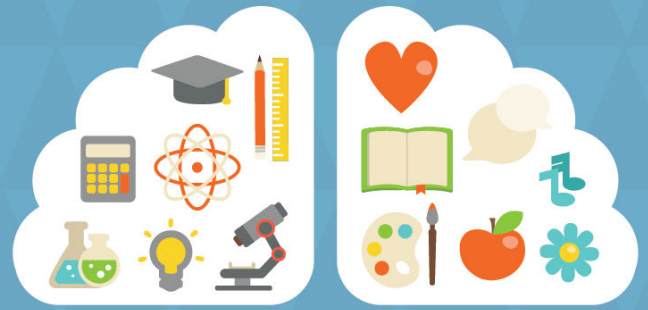




Department of Psychology
The University of Hong Kong
香港大學心理學系



The Neurodevelopmental Impact of Extreme Neglect in Early Childhood?

November 5, 2024 (Tuesday) | 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. |
CPD - LG.18 | The Jockey Club Tower | Centennial Campus | HKU



Prof. Edmund Sonuga-Barke

Professor of Developmental Psychology, Psychiatry and Neuroscience
Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience
King's College London

Abstract:

Neuro-developmental conditions such as ADHD and autism are strongly familial and heritable - with the later, in particular, pointing to their predominantly genetic origins. In general terms environmental adversity, in the form of maltreatment is, at best, considered to play a marginal role in moderating such genetic influences. In contrast, the English & Romanian Adoptees study has convincingly shown that risk for neuro-developmental disorders (autism and ADHD in particular) is substantially elevated in individuals exposed to extreme deprivation experienced in non-familial institutional settings early in life. For instance, in the English Romanian Adoptees (ERA) study, adults exposed as young children to between 6 and 43 months of extreme deprivation in the Romanian orphanages, that existed at the time of the fall of the Communist regime, prior to their adoption, displayed a 7-fold elevation of risk for ADHD. An effect that is impossible to explain simply in terms of genetic risk factors. In this talk, I will describe the ERA study as a unique natural experiment, and review its key clinical, neuropsychological and brain imaging findings. I will explain how the study has provided new insights into the power that environmental influences have to shape neuro-development. By so doing I will raise the question - Where do deprivation-driven ADHD and autism fit into current conceptualisations of these conditions?

Zoom Meeting (For participants who couldn't attend the seminar in person)
Meeting ID: 698 555 5998 | Password: Psyc

Enquiry: rpsyc@hku.hk