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Treasuring teen friendships: behavioral and neural mechanisms underlying adolescent learning and mental health in the peer context

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Propositions

Accompanying the public defense of Iris Koele's dissertation

Treasuring Teen Friendships

*Behavioral and neural mechanisms underlying adolescent learning
and mental health in the peer context*

1. Adolescence is a period of observational learning opportunities from different types of peers, such as friends, classmates, and unfamiliar peers. *(This thesis)*
2. The COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted adolescents' academic and mental health outcomes. *(This thesis)*
3. Adolescence can serve as a window of opportunity to improve mental health by fostering high-quality friendships. *(This thesis)*
4. Reward processing for self and peers rely on common reward-related brain regions in adolescents. *(This thesis)*
5. Experimental studies examining social relationships in adolescence should include realistic and ecologically valid experimental conditions.
6. (Neuro-)scientific research on adolescents' mental health can benefit from a symptom-level and longitudinal approach.
7. A multidimensional approach combining research methods from various disciplines, such as neuroimaging and sociometric methods, provides valuable insights into adolescents' social and cognitive development.
8. Collaborating with youth during the scientific process and outreach is beneficial to optimally communicate developmental research findings to the population in question.
9. It is important for researchers to anticipate on situational factors (e.g., pandemic) that can affect study designs and plannings, highlighting the importance of flexible online data-collection platforms and a good rapport with societal partners (e.g., schools).
10. Open science practices are important to advance research quality and accessibility to the larger community.