



Family Influences on Emerging Adult Adjustment

Jennifer L. Tanner

Senior Research Associate

Simmons Longitudinal Study

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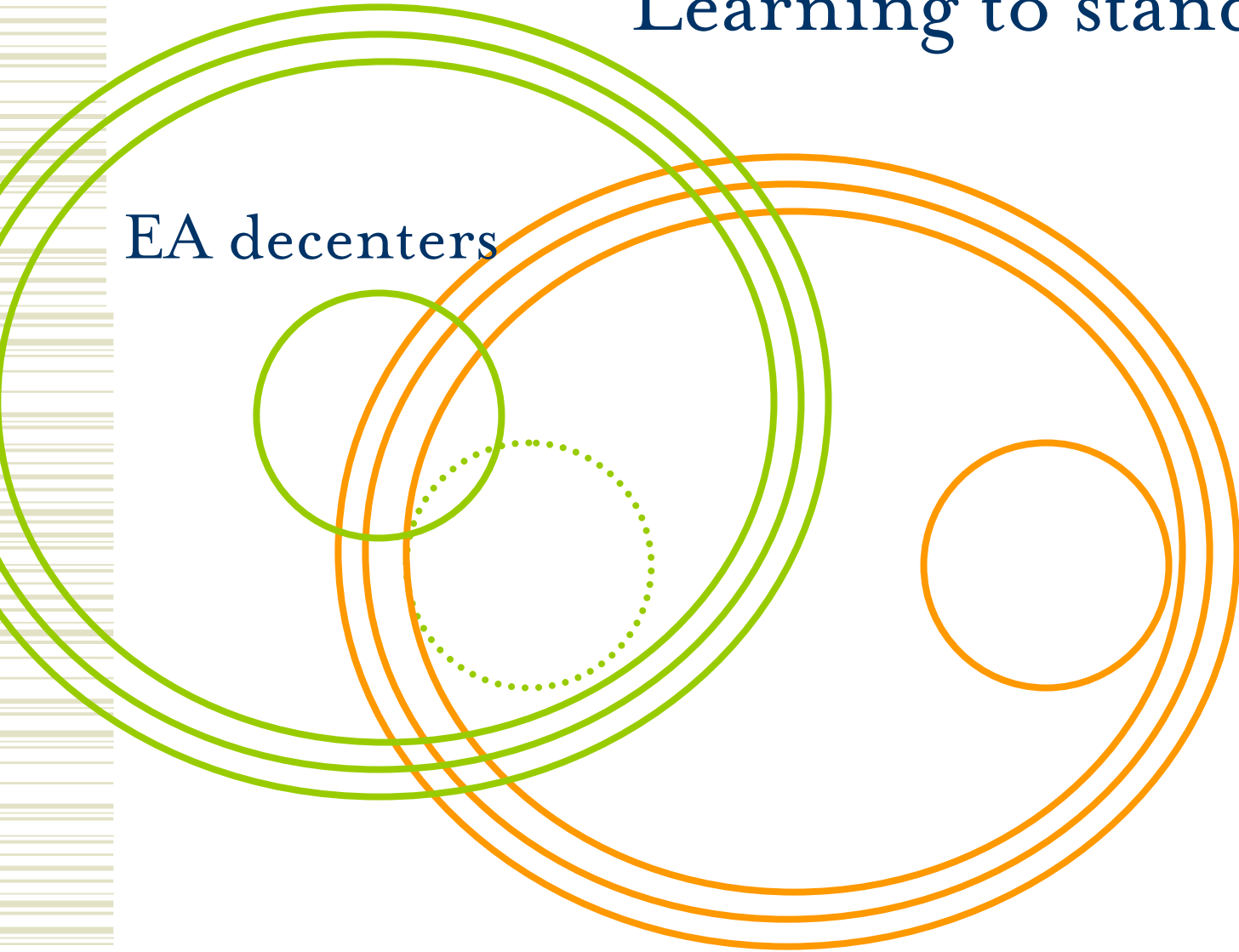
Overview

- ◆ Emerging adulthood (EA), ages 18 to 26
(Arnett, 2000)
- ◆ Well-being (Mirowsky, 1995; Schulenberg et al., 2000)
- ◆ High risk (Kessler et al., 1994)

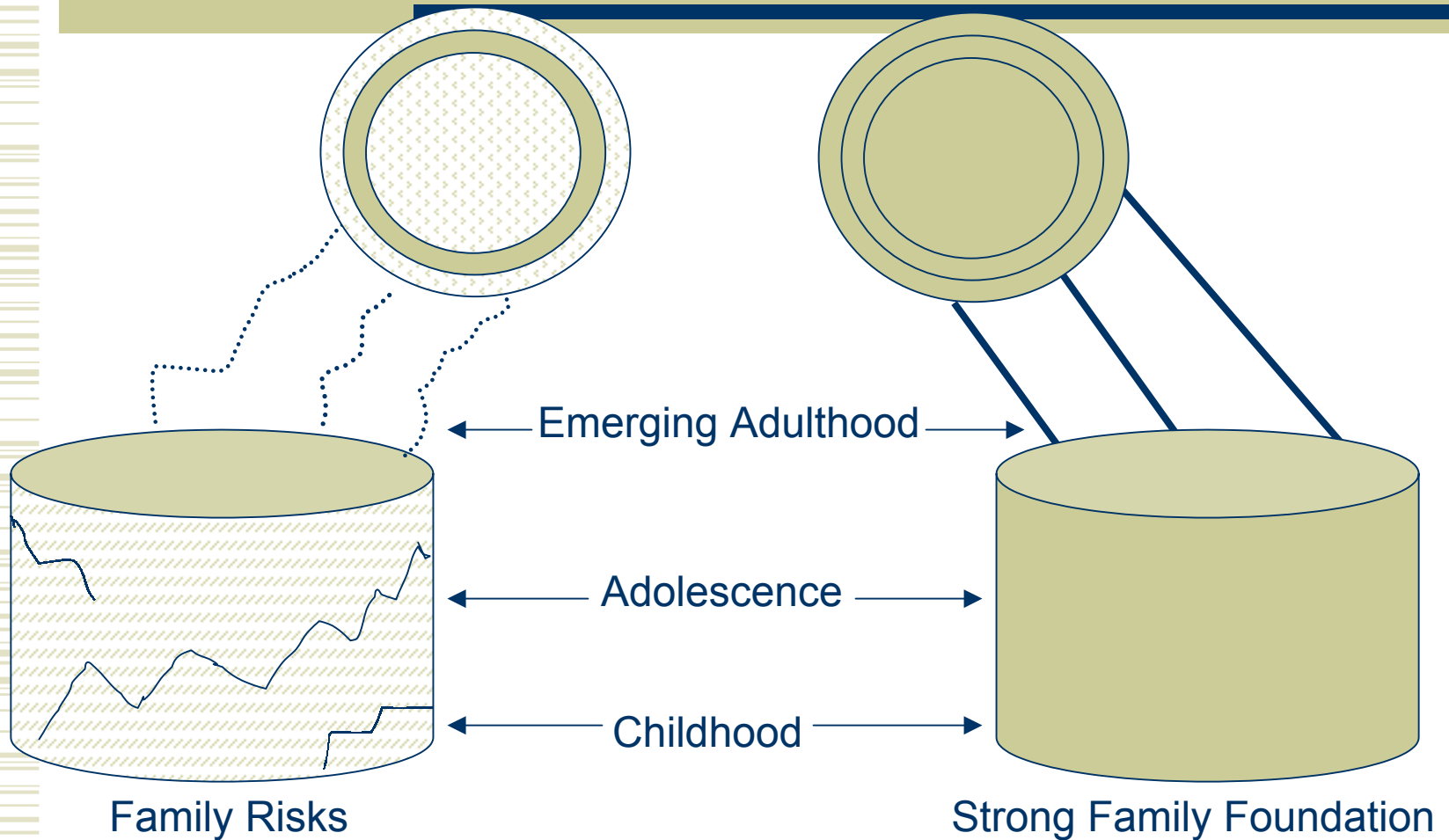
Learning to stand alone

EA decenters

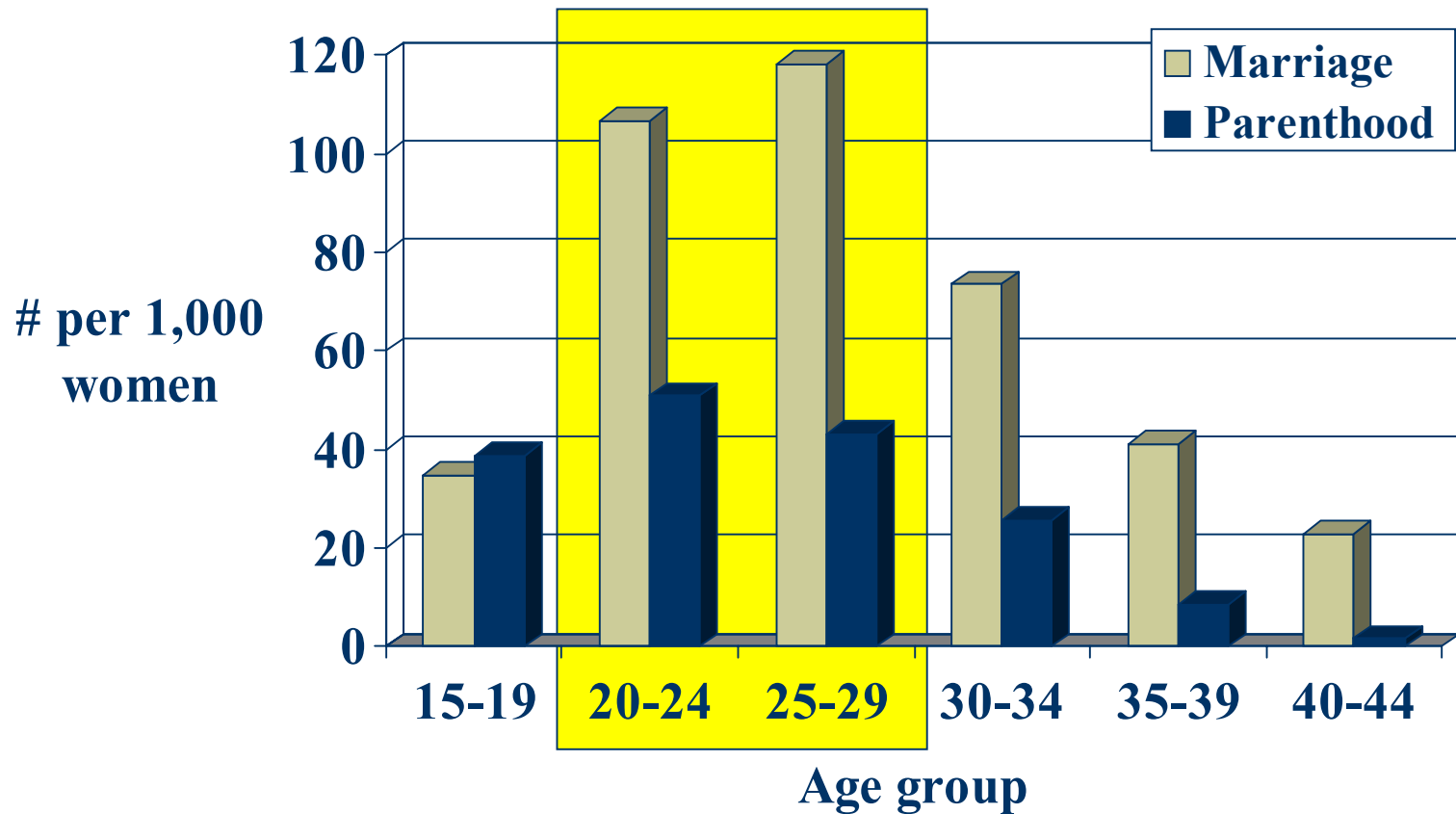
Family-of-origin



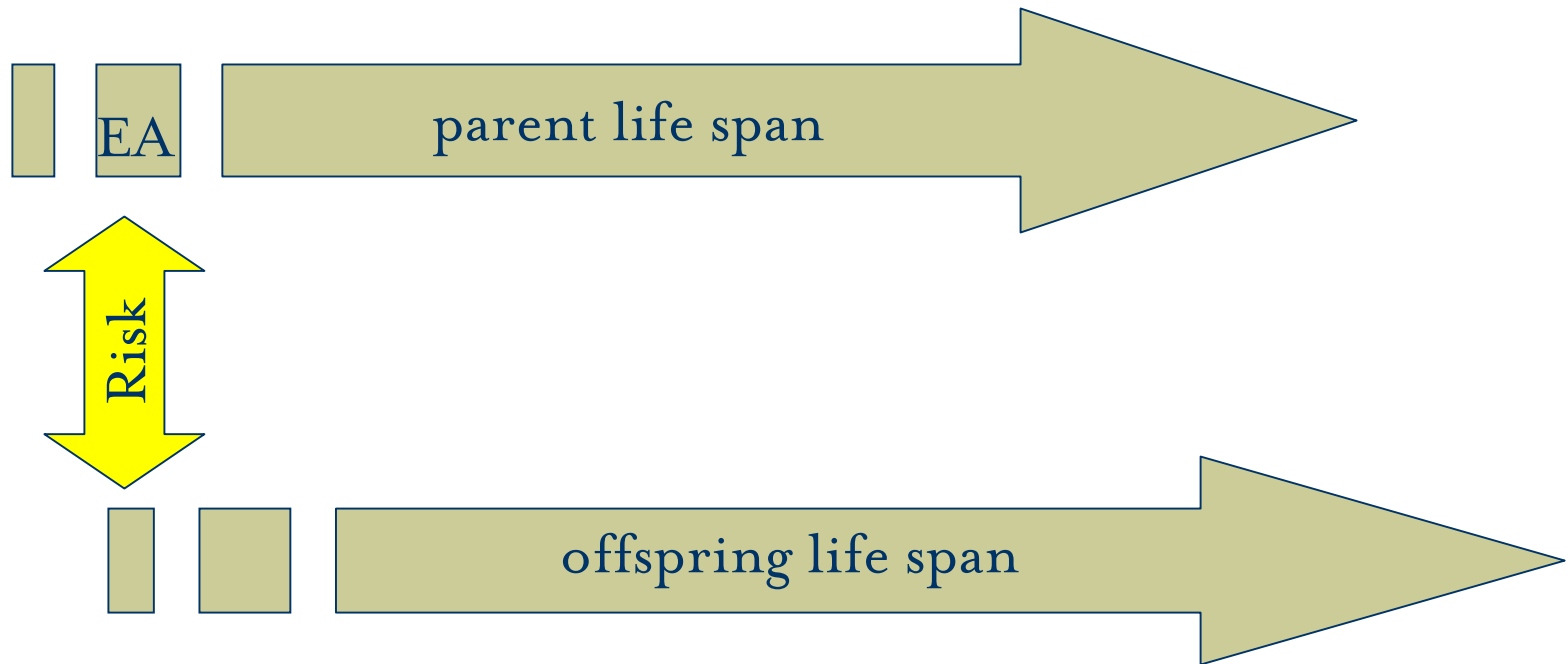
The Family as “launching pad”



Transitions to Marriage and Parenthood



Intergenerational transmission of risk





EA Adjustment



- ◆ Mental health

- ◆ Developmental tasks
 - Interpersonal relations
 - Intimate relationships (i.e., marriage)
 - Relationships with mothers and fathers

Cumulative family risk exposure

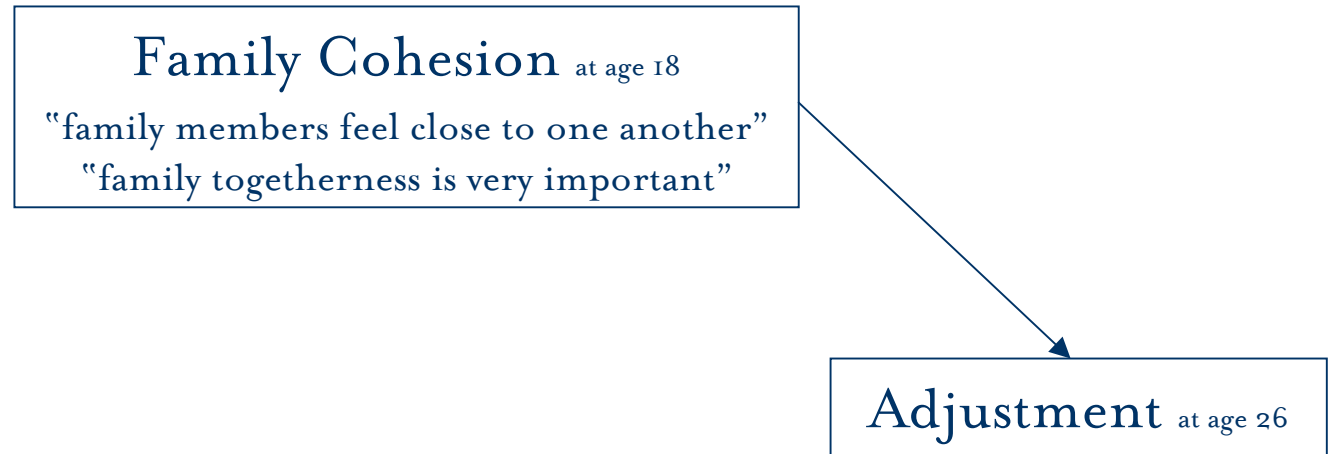
- ◆ Family structure change
 - parental divorce separation, death
 - B/w family members, b/w family member and child
- ◆ Family violence
- ◆ Family conflict
- ◆ Parent psychiatric disorder
- ◆ Sibling psychiatric disorder
- ◆ Low family SES

Study Aim I



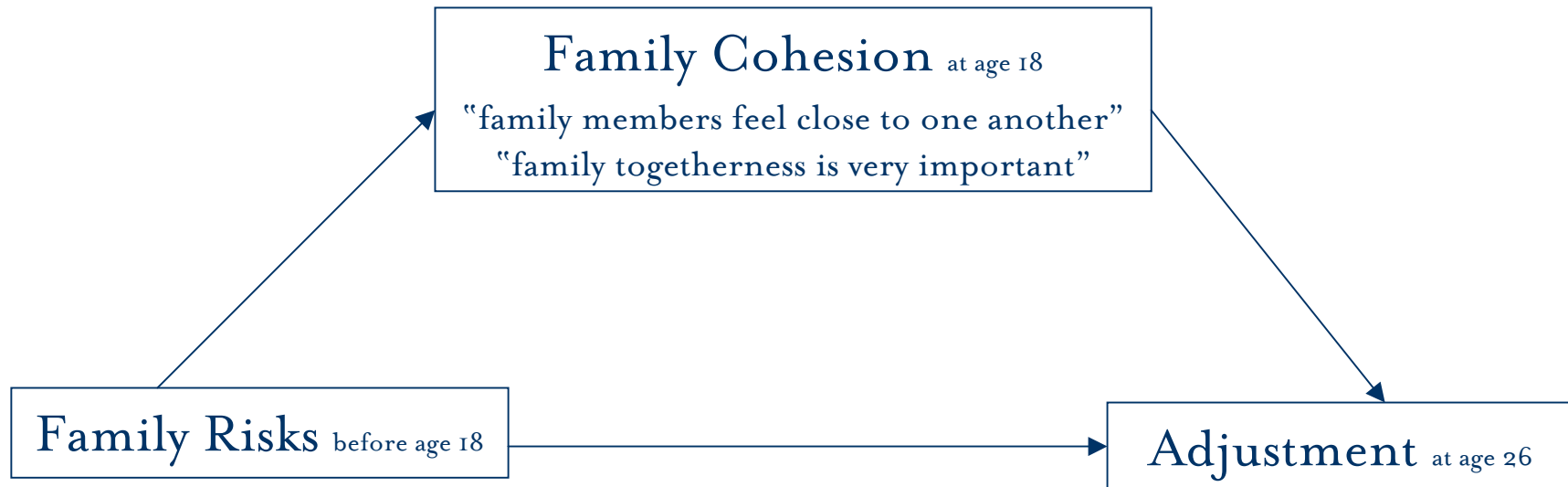
Family Risk Model:
Associations between family risks and EA adjustment

Study Aim 2



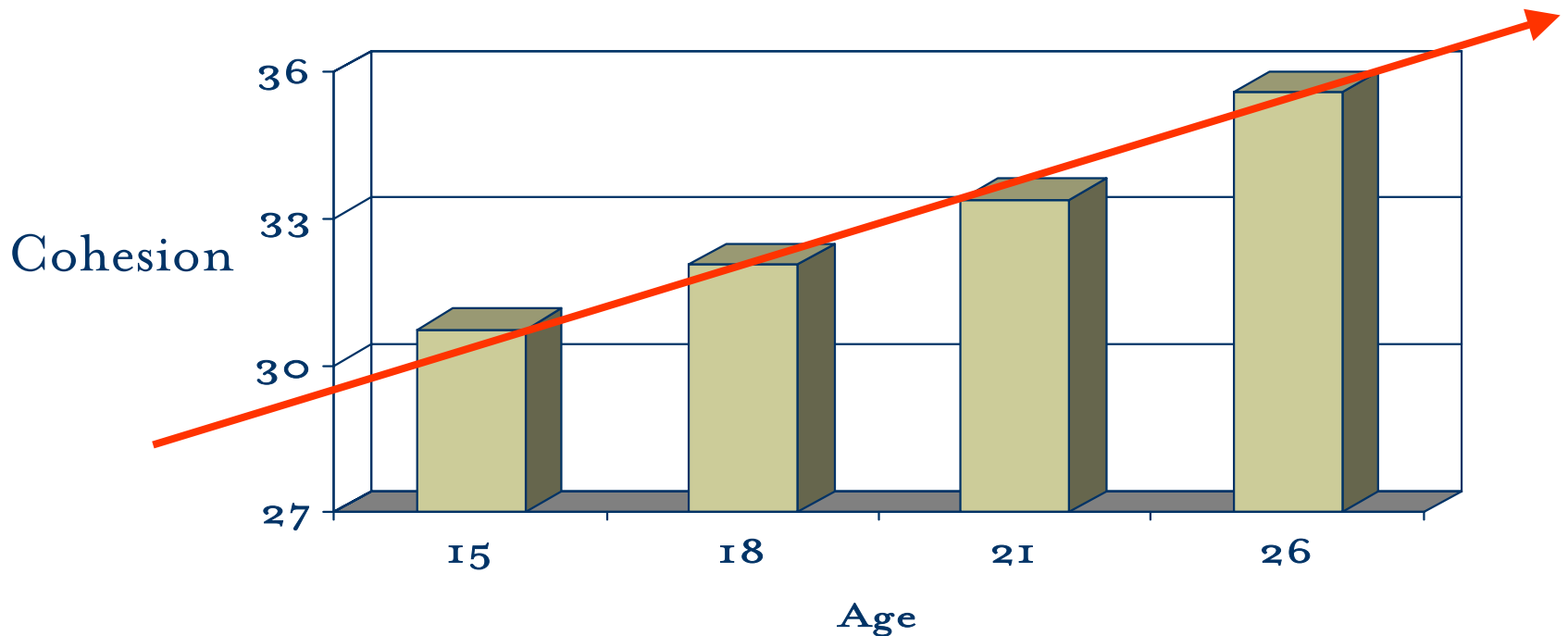
Family Strength Model:
Family cohesion as a predictor of EA adjustment

Study Aim 3



Mediated Model: Family Cohesion as a mediator of associations between family risk and EA adjustment

Change in cohesion across the transition to adulthood



$r(\text{coh}(t1) * \text{changecoh}) = -.29, p < .0001$

Random co-efficient growth-model; (Tanner); Simmons Longitudinal Study data

Study Aims

- 1) Family risk (by 18) → EA adjustment
- 2) Family cohesion (at 18) → EA adjustment
- 3) Family cohesion mediates (buffers) prior risk exposure
- 4) Change in cohesion (18 to 26) → age 18 family influences on EA adjustment

Study Subsample

n = 362; 180 males; 182 females

At age 26

- ◆ 41% living with parents
- ◆ 85% financially independent (from parents)
- ◆ 36% completed college
- ◆ 23% were married
- ◆ 20% were parents

Family Risks and Family Cohesion

Family risks (by age 18): range = 0-6; $MN = 1.83$, $SD = 1.48$

- ◆ Family structure change
- ◆ Parent psychiatric disorder
- ◆ Sibling psychiatric disorder
- ◆ Family violence
- ◆ Family conflict
- ◆ Low family SES

Family cohesion (at age 18): range 10-50;
 $MN = 31.47$; $SD = 7.29$) (~~X~~) (FACES III)

EA Adjustment (age 26)

Mental health

- Total Problems (self-report[SR]; YASR, Achenbach, 1997)
- Total Problems (mother report[MR]; YBCL, Achenbach, 1997) (X)
- Global Assessment of Functioning (Interviewer report; APA, 1994)
- Psychiatric Impairment, past year (DIS; APA, 1994)

Interpersonal relations

- Relationship Quality with mother (Study instrument)
- Relationship Quality with father (Study instrument) (X)
- Interpersonal Problems (SIPS; Simmons Interpersonal Problems Scale)

Study Aim I

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- 4) Change in cohesion (18 to 26) → age 18 family influences on EA adjustment

Model I: Family Risks Model

simultaneous linear regression, controlling for gender

Family Risks

- ◆ Mental Health
 - + Total Problems (SR)
 - + Total Problems (MR)
 - - Global Assessment of Functioning
 - + Psychiatric Disorder, past year
- ◆ Interpersonal adjustment
 - - Relationship Quality with mother
 - - Relationship Quality with father
 - + Interpersonal Problems

Study Aim 2

- 1) Family risk (by 18) → EA adjustment
- 2) Family cohesion (at 18) → EA adjustment
- 3) Family cohesion mediates (buffers) prior risk exposure
- 4) Change in cohesion (18 to 26) → age 18 family influences on EA adjustment

Model 2: Family Strengths Model

simultaneous linear regression, controlling for gender

Family Cohesion

- ◆ Mental Health
 - Total Problems (SR)
 - Total Problems (MR)
 - + Global Assessment of Functioning
 - Psychiatric Impairment, past year
- ◆ Interpersonal Relations
 - + Relationship Quality with mother
 - + Relationship Quality with father
 - - Interpersonal problems

Study Aim 3

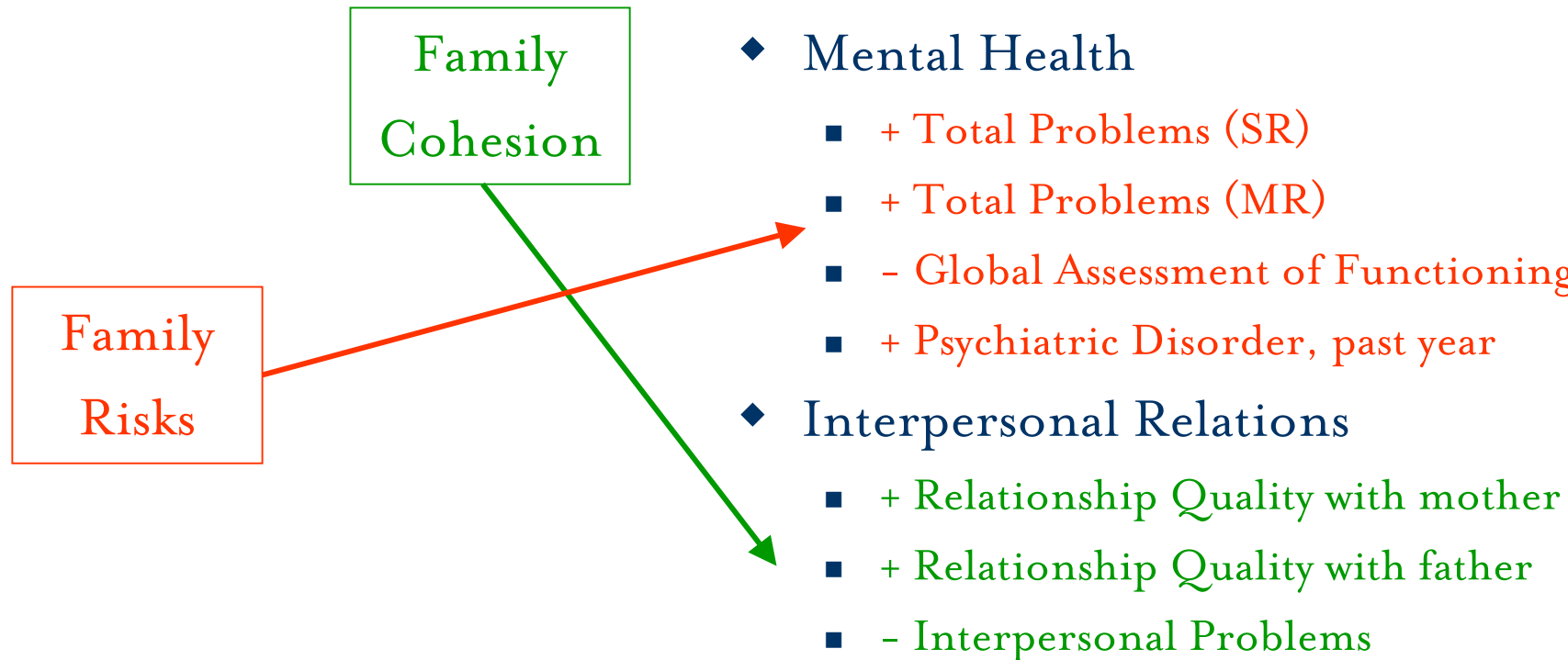
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Family Risks & Family Cohesion

- ◆ Cumulative family risk is negatively associated with family cohesion, $\beta = -.22$, $p < .0001$, $AdjR^2 = .06$
- ◆ Cumulative family risk not related to *increase* in family cohesion from 18 to 26

Mediated Model

hierarchical regression, block I: gender, family risks, family cohesion

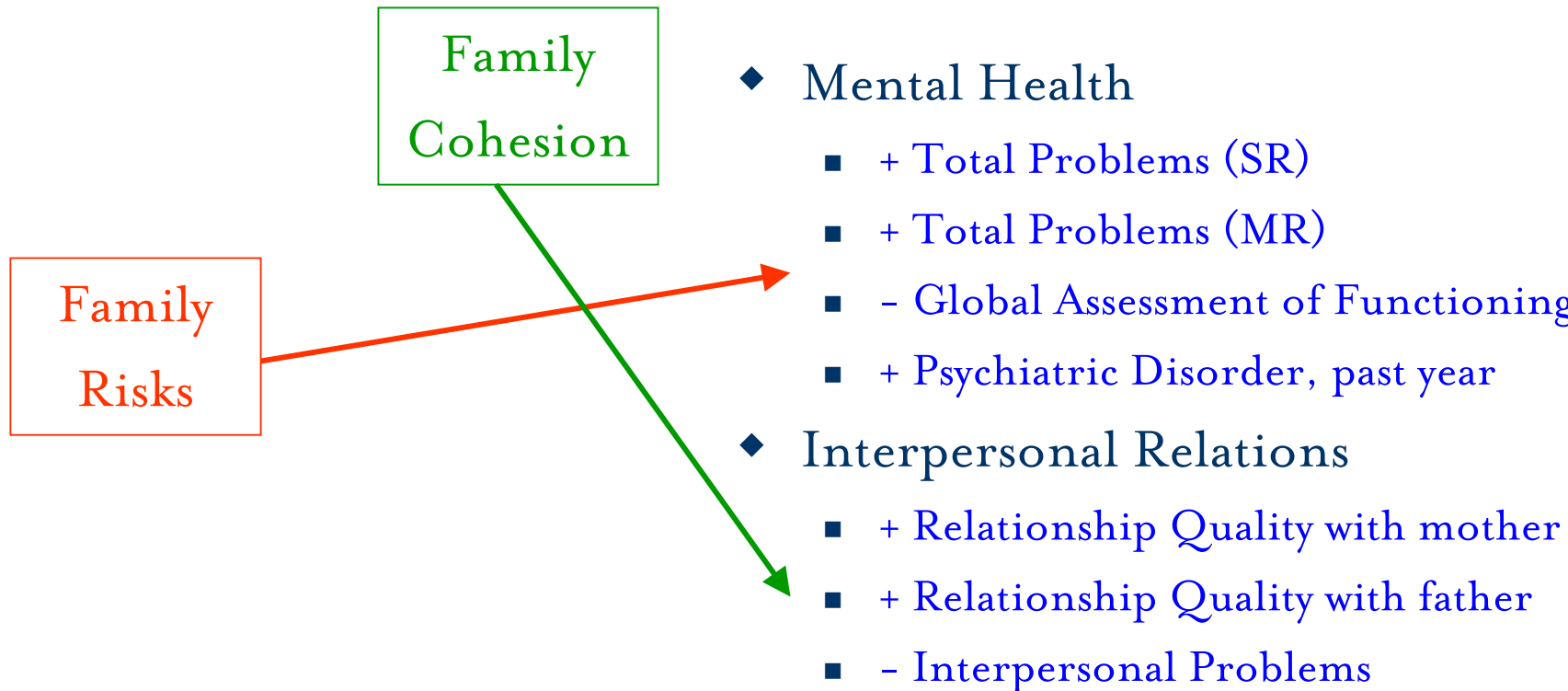


Study Aim 4

- 1) Family risk (by 18) → EA adjustment
- 2) Family cohesion (at 18) → EA adjustment
- 3) Family cohesion mediates (buffers) prior risk exposure
- 4) Change in cohesion (18 to 26) → age 18 family influences on EA adjustment

Mediated Model w/increase in cohesion

hierarchical regression, block 2: gender, family risks, family cohesion, & increase in cohesion from 18 to 26



Conclusions and Implications

- Long-term impact of early family experiences
- Specific rather than global links
 - Family risk → EA mental health
 - Family cohesion → EA Interpersonal relations
- Double-risk
- Family cohesion → interpersonal relations → MH
- Increase in cohesion
- Intergenerational transmission of risk

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