

# Personality Pathology in Adolescence: A Nomological Network

Personality disorders often have their roots in childhood or during the development into adulthood. Adolescents with personality disorders experience a lot of hindrance and obstacles in later life. For a better diagnosis in young people and the timely provision of suitable interventions, it is important to look beyond the severity of the disorder. This PhD research by Amy See shows that the relationship between characteristics and manifestations of the disorder, friendships and the societal narrative around the disorder are largely related. By considering these factors together young people can get a better diagnosis and more effective tools with which they can adjust their behavior.

## Public summary

Personality disorders (PDs) have their roots in childhood and, and the pathway leading to adult PD sometimes begin in youth. There is also evidence that PDs are as prevalent in adolescents as in adults. Moreover, adolescent PDs are impairing and put adolescents at risk for later problems in many life domains. However, research on PD in adolescence is currently scarce. Therefore, this thesis aims to further uncover the nature of PDs in adolescence by investigating a) the relationships between PD traits, b) the relation between PD traits and friendship, and c) the relation between PD traits and narrative identity.

First, the thesis focused on the relations among PD traits using alternative approaches such as network analysis and Latent Class Tree (LCT) modelling. Second, the thesis focused on links between different expressions of PDs, that is, PD traits, peer relations, and narrative identity. This was addressed by associating PD classes with outcomes of peer relations as well as relating PD traits with themes of narrative identity.

The network approach may be useful for practitioners when it comes to diagnostic purposes, potentially placing more emphasis on central traits during assessment. The hierarchical tree typology with LCT modelling demonstrated the possibility to identify hierarchical PD classes grouping individuals instead of variables. Moreover, these classes provided more information than just different levels of severity. A hierarchical tree could aid in diagnostics by first screening at the broadest/general level and subsequently fine-tuning to differentiate between more specific classes of pathology. This could aid an efficient investment of resources.

Findings on associations between different expressions of youth's personality pathology showed that there are some significant and non-significant linkages. For instance, measures of friendship and social functioning were differentially associated with some of the identified classes. Adolescents with high levels of schizotypal features had lower levels for most of the narrative identity features that were coded.

The findings in this thesis have shown that taking a more comprehensive approach in assessing different expressions of personality pathology concurrently is promising. A full understanding of the broader personality pathology picture provides important insights for assessment that could aid in improving diagnosis and adaptive personality development among adolescents.