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What does your research focus on?

I study a number of facets of adolescent psychopathology, but I'm particularly interested in how different aspects of puberty — its timing and tempo, its early-life antecedents, and the ways that children, peers, and family members perceive and understand it — lay the groundwork for future adjustment. My research tends to be fairly interdisciplinary, integrating developmental psychopathology with behavior genetics, public health, evolutionary psychology, and epidemiology. That's partly reflective of my interests and partly reflective of the fact that the topic of puberty lends itself to that sort of work, since it's a transition which spans biological, social, and psychological domains.

What drew you to this line of research and why is it exciting to you?

Puberty has a perplexingly dual nature. It's a universal experience, which we all pass through on the way to adulthood. But it's also a well-replicated psychological risk; it's linked to specific early life adversities and antecedents; and it's associated with clear shifts in symptom presentation and prevalence of clinical disorders.

Who were/are your mentors or scientific influences?

Throughout my career, I've been fortunate to have a cadre of extraordinary mentors, colleagues, and collaborators. Eric Turkheimer and Bob Emery, at the University of Virginia, were exceptional graduate school advisors. They had a remarkable passion for psychological theory, read broadly, and thought critically about everything they read. The way I think about psychology owes a great deal to their influence. I've also been privileged in my colleagues — first at the University of Oregon and now at Cornell. It's a gift to be surrounded by talented scholars; at both schools, I've found myself learning from my colleagues on a near daily basis. Within my specific research area, I've been inspired by the work of Xiaojia Ge. Ge passed away a few years ago and I was only lucky enough to meet him once, but I re-read his papers frequently and each time, I find myself astonished.

What's your future research agenda?

Theory and methodology are two passions of mine, and I've got a small behemoth of a methodology paper percolating at the moment. I'm also piloting a brief intervention this summer; this is the first time I've explored anything like that and I'm excited to see how it unfolds.

What publication are you most proud of?

Mendle, J., Harden, K. P., Brooks-Gunn, J., & Graber, J. A. (2010). Development's tortoise and hare: Pubertal timing, pubertal tempo, and depressive symptoms in boys and girls. *Developmental Psychology*, 46, 1341–1353.

When I was first out of graduate school, I found myself thinking a lot about the rate of pubertal maturation, and specifically about how hard it must be to adapt to rapid change compared to more gradual change. I ended up publishing a paper exploring links between extremely rapid maturation and depression. My graduate work employed behavior genetics methodology, and this was the first non-behavior genetics paper I'd written, so it stands out as a project that required completely different skills from what I'd always done as well as a new level of autonomy. Plus: the results are genuinely interesting. In fact, they still intrigue me.