



ARE SOCIAL SKILLS THE CRITICAL LINK BETWEEN ADHD AND RISKY INTERNET USE?

Fatma Serra Çelik, Saliha B. Selman & Songül Derin

1 Bezmialem Vakıf University, Medicine Faculty, Istanbul, Türkiye

2 Human Development & Family Studies, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI, USA

3 Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Bezmialem Vakıf University, Istanbul, Türkiye

AGENDA

☐ Introduction

- Background
- Gaps
- Aims

☐ Method

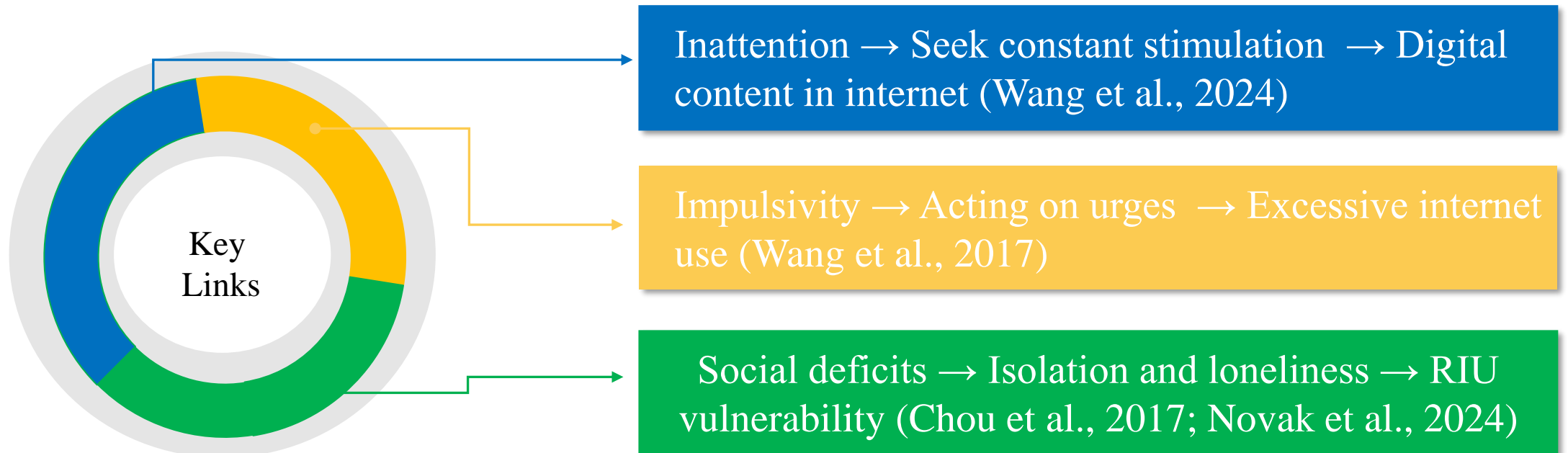
☐ Results

☐ Discussion

- Conclusion
- Strengths & Limitations

BACKGROUND

- **RISKY INTERNET USE (RIU)**: Excessive internet use leading to mental, social, and behavioral issues (Theopilus et al., 2024).
- **ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)**: Neurodevelopmental disorder with, **inattention**, hyperactivity, and **impulsivity** (Drechsler et al., 2020), *closely associated with*
 - **Social deficits** (Carpenter et al., 2009)



BACKGROUND

CHILDREN WITH ADHD



Social Deficits

Inattention

Impulsivity

CHILDREN WITH RIU



GAPS

- ❑ Few studies focus on the potential role of social skills deficits in the ADHD-RIU link (Chou et al., 2017)
- ❑ Most studies are conducted in high-income countries, leaving gaps in understanding the global situation

AIMS

- ❑ **Research Question:** How do social skills deficits play a role in the association between an ADHD diagnosis and RIU in youth?
- ❑ **Aim:** To explore the role of social skills as a potential pathway linking ADHD diagnosis to higher levels of RIU in youth
- ❑ **Hypothesis:** Social skills deficits play a role in the association between ADHD and RIU, acting as a key pathway linking the two



METHODS

□ Sample Demographics

- 80% power for a 95% confidence interval $n1 = n2 = 71$

Case Group

- 71 children with ADHD
- Age: 6-12 years
- No psychiatric medication
- No other neurologic/psychiatric condition
- Referred to the clinic

Control Group

- 71 children with no ADHD
- Age: 6-12 years
- No psychiatric medication
- No neurologic/psychiatric condition
- Snowball technique

METHODS

☐ Measures & Data Collection

ADHD	DSM V and Conners Parent Rating Scale
Risky Internet Use	Parent-Child Internet Addiction Scale
Social Skills	Social Skills Evaluation Scale
Covariates	Sociodemographic Form

Case Group

- Interviews are conducted with parents
- Clinical sessions

Control Group

- Interviews are conducted with parents
- Face to face / Phone calls



RESULTS

Sample Demographics

	Case Group	Control Group	P Value
Gender			
Male	18 (%25)	32 (%45)	0.02
Female	53 (%75)	39 (%55)	
Birth Timing			
Preterm	9 (%12.7)	15 (%21.1)	0.003
Term	62 (%87.33)	48 (%67.6)	
Postterm	0	8 (%11.3)	
Number of Siblings			
1	20 (%28.6)	9 (%12.7)	0.02
2	39 (%55.7)	37 (%52.1)	
3	10 (%14.3)	15 (%21.1)	
4	1 (%1.6)	7 (%9.9)	
5	0	2 (%2.8)	
6	0	1 (%1.4)	
Mother Education			
Less than high school	26 (%37.1)	4 (%5.6)	<0.001
High school	19 (%27.1)	17 (%23.9)	
Associate degree	0	15 (%21.1)	
University	25 (%35.7)	28 (%39.4)	
Graduate degree	0	16 (%21.1)	
Father Education			
Less than high school	29 (%41.4)	4 (%5.6)	<0.001
High school	22 (%31.4)	12 (%16.9)	
Associate degree	0	3 (%4.2)	
University	19 (%27.1)	41 (%57.7)	
Graduate degree	0	11 (%15.5)	
Household Income			
Low	14 (%19.7)	1 (%1.4)	<0.001
Medium	21 (%29.6)	13 (%18.3)	
High	36 (%50.7)	57 (%30.3)	

RESULTS

Group Differences

	Control Group (N=71)	Case Group (N=71)	p-value
Conners Total Score	26.1 (15.9)	62.4 (12.7)	<0.001
Risky Internet Use Total Score	20.2 (16.4)	28.8 (21.9)	0.009
Social Skills Total Score	219 (35.1)	107 (34.2)	<0.001

RESULTS

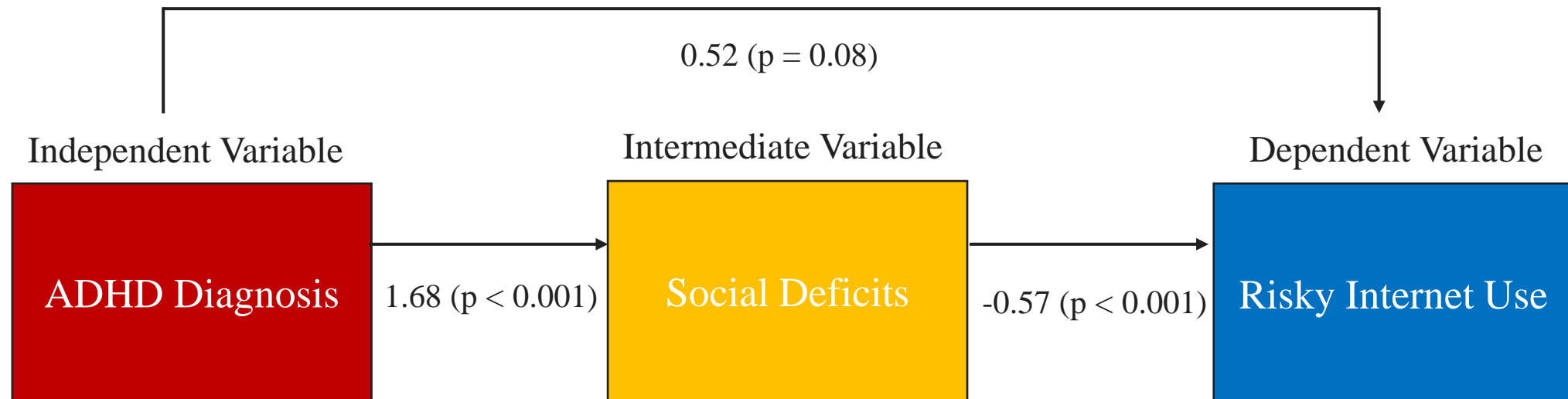
Path Analysis

Direct Paths		Std. B	p
ADHD Diagnosis	→ RIU	.52	.08
ADHD Diagnosis	→ Social Skills	1.68	<.001
Social Skills	→ RIU	-.57	<.001
Indirect Path			
ADHD on RIU through Social Skills		-.96	.001
Total effect		-.43	.009
Covariates			
Gender	→ ADHD Diagnosis	-.13	.04
Birth Timing	→ ADHD Diagnosis	-.17	.002
Total number of siblings	→ ADHD Diagnosis	.16	<.001
Household Income	→ ADHD Diagnosis	.07	.21
Mother Education	→ ADHD Diagnosis	.09	.02
Father Education	→ ADHD Diagnosis	.15	<.001

RESULTS

Path Analysis

Figure 1. The path model examining the association between ADHD diagnosis, social skills and risky internet use in children



CONCLUSION

- ❑ Social skills deficits play a role in the association between ADHD and RIU
- ❑ Children with ADHD are more likely to engage in risky internet behavior because of their impaired social skills, rather than directly due to their ADHD diagnosis
- ❑ Clinical interventions targeting both ADHD symptoms and social skill development could mitigate the risk of RIU

STRENGTHS

- ❑ No previous research has specifically examined this relationship
- ❑ Excellent Cronbach's alpha scores indicated the credibility
- ❑ Direct clinical relevance
- ❑ Turkish sample adds to cross-cultural data

LIMITATIONS

- ❑ Cross-sectional design precludes causal conclusions
- ❑ Reliance on self-report measures may introduce bias
- ❑ Absence of teacher-reported measures could limit understanding of children's social functioning across contexts

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- ❑ **Longitudinal research** to clarify the causal pathways among ADHD, social skills, and RIU
- ❑ Develop **interventions** integrating social skills training into ADHD treatment plans
- ❑ Research investigating long-term effectiveness of these interventions

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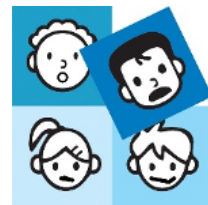
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NEXT STEPS

- ❑ **Conference Poster Presentation:** *Are Social Skills the critical link between ADHD and RIU – ESCAP, 2025 (Accepted)*



- ❑ **Manuscript Publication:** *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health – (Under peer review)*



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Thank you!



Contact information: serraceliik@gmail.com