



## The development of peer relation difficulties: findings from longitudinal studies

### Abstract:

Children's peer relationships play an important developmental role for learning new social skills and for the validation of the Self.

Sadly, a significant number of children are rejected, harassed and victimised by one or more peers on a regular basis, often over several years and now, increasingly so through pervasive social network means. This is a complex problem that involves individual and familial risk factors, group processes, and developmental changes. However, we know very little about how peer difficulties unfold developmentally, and about their underlying bio-social processes.

This presentation will review relevant findings from the *Quebec Longitudinal Study of Child Development* and the *Quebec Newborn Twin Study*, two ongoing population-based birth cohorts that have been prospectively assessed from age 5 months to adulthood.

The implications of these findings for our understanding of the developmental processes of peer relation difficulties, as well as for preventive intervention will be discussed.

### Key message:

1. Describing and understanding the origin, development, and consequences of peer relationship difficulties calls for an integrated life-long, bio-social approach, starting in the preschool years.