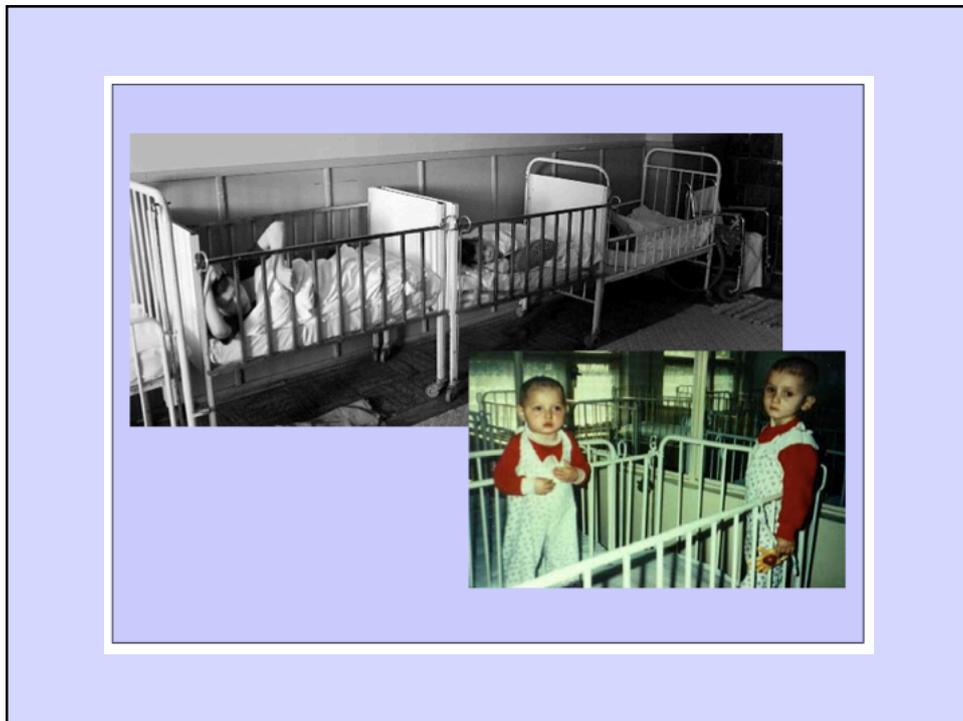


The adopted children from Eastern Europe grow up:

21 August 2011

A pilot study of adjustment in early adulthood



The adopted children from Eastern Europe grow up:

21 August 2011

A pilot study of adjustment in early adulthood

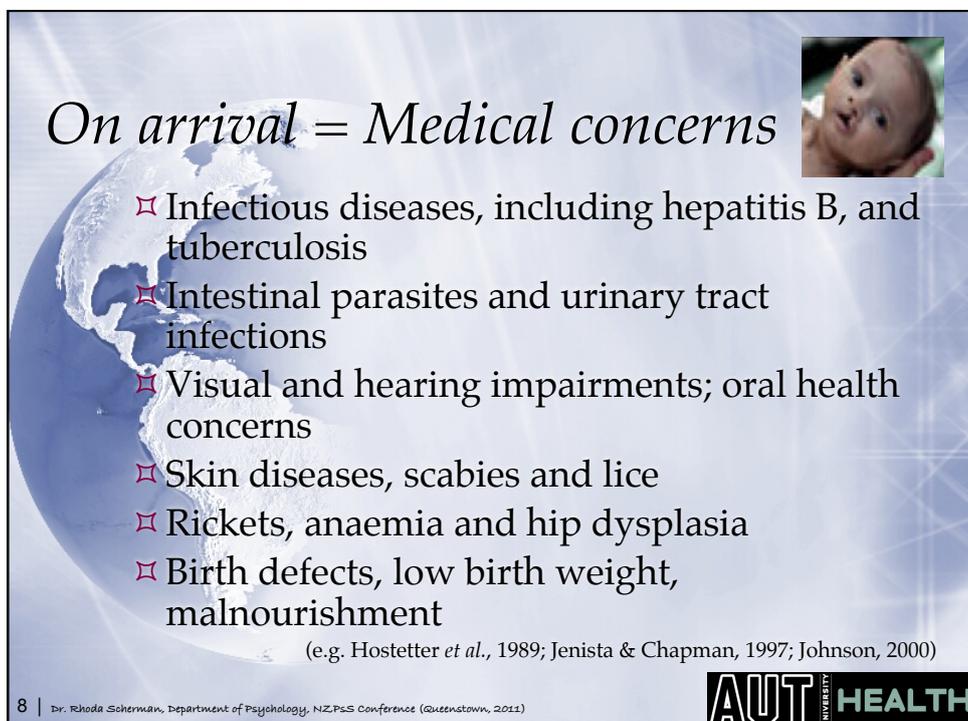




Developmental Issues

- ✧ Bowlby was the first to describe the detrimental effects of early institutionalisation
- ✧ More recently, developmental neurologists estimate:
 - ✧ An institutionalised child loses one month of development for every three months in an institution (Federici, 1999)
 - ✧ A one-year-old toddler is developmentally on par with an 8-month-old

7 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPSS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



On arrival = Medical concerns

- ✧ Infectious diseases, including hepatitis B, and tuberculosis
- ✧ Intestinal parasites and urinary tract infections
- ✧ Visual and hearing impairments; oral health concerns
- ✧ Skin diseases, scabies and lice
- ✧ Rickets, anaemia and hip dysplasia
- ✧ Birth defects, low birth weight, malnourishment

(e.g. Hostetter *et al.*, 1989; Jenista & Chapman, 1997; Johnson, 2000)

8 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPSS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



Developmental Delays

- ✧ Some 1990 studies found as many as 85-90% of children were developmentally delayed
- ✧ Varying degrees of gross and fine motor delays, neurological problems, and decreased muscle tone
 - ✧ Many of which associated with malnutrition, and/or an environment that restricts movement and does not encourage the children to sit or reach
 - ✧ Tiered crèches
- ✧ They are smaller and shorter than their age-mates

(e.g. Hostetter *et al.*, 1989; Judge, 1999; Rutter *et al.*, 1998)

9 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPSS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



(Johnson, 2010)

10 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPSS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



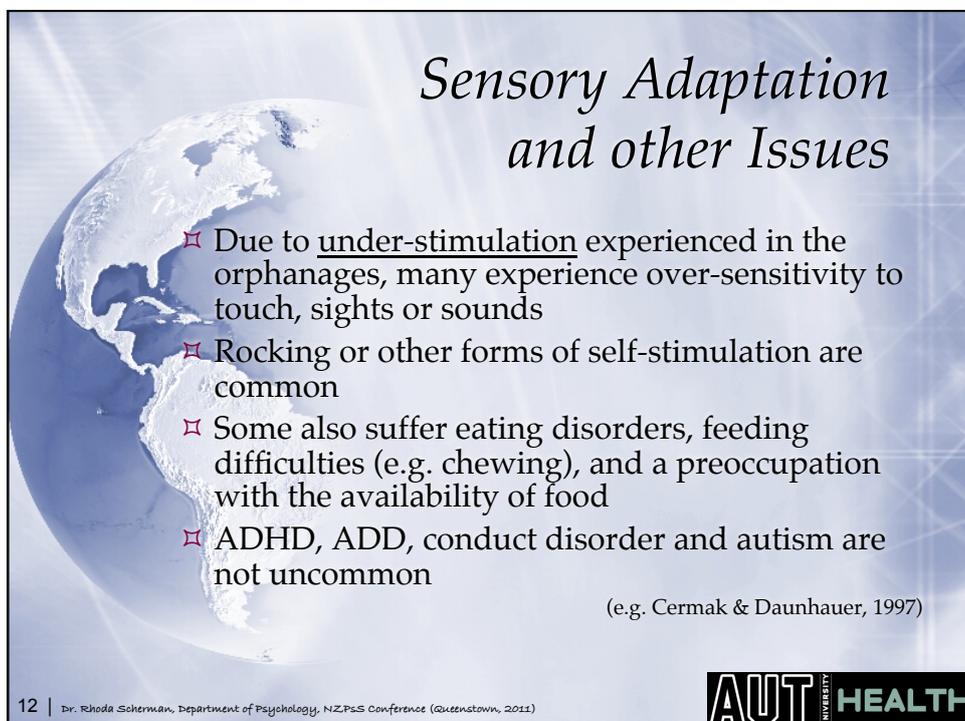


Social and Emotional Concerns

- ✧ temper tantrums
- ✧ anxiousness
- ✧ low attention span
- ✧ school avoidance
- ✧ clinging behaviour
- ✧ sleep disturbances
- ✧ bed wetting
- ✧ ambivalent parental attachment
- ✧ inappropriate friendly behaviour

(e.g. Hostetter *et al.*, 1989; Judge, 1999; Rutter *et al.*, 1998)

11 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPSS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



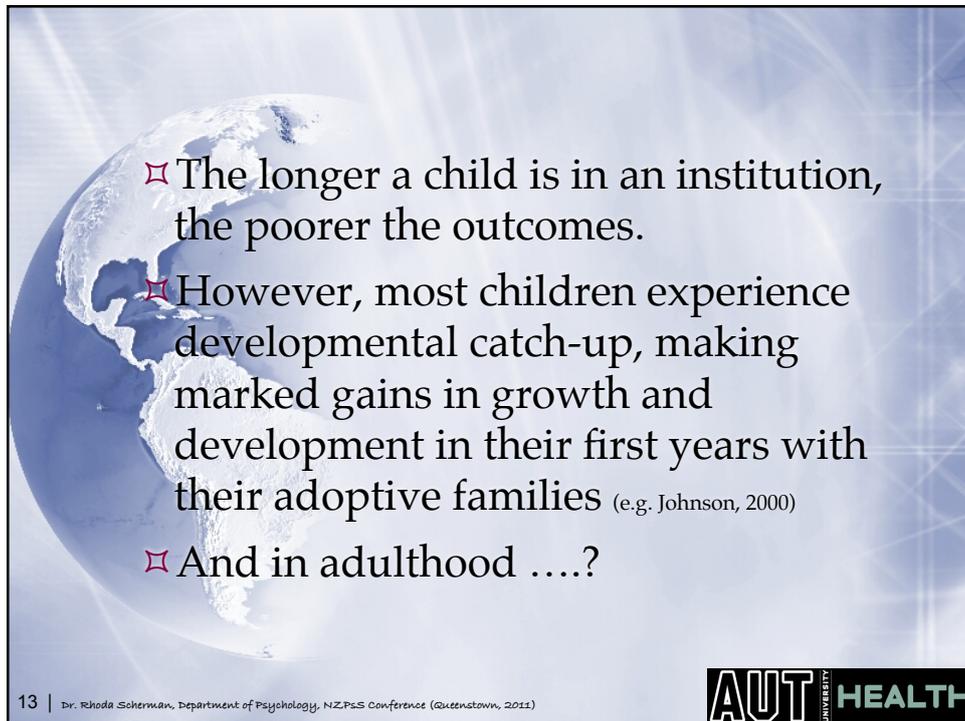
Sensory Adaptation and other Issues

- ✧ Due to under-stimulation experienced in the orphanages, many experience over-sensitivity to touch, sights or sounds
- ✧ Rocking or other forms of self-stimulation are common
- ✧ Some also suffer eating disorders, feeding difficulties (e.g. chewing), and a preoccupation with the availability of food
- ✧ ADHD, ADD, conduct disorder and autism are not uncommon

(e.g. Cermak & Daunhauer, 1997)

12 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPSS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



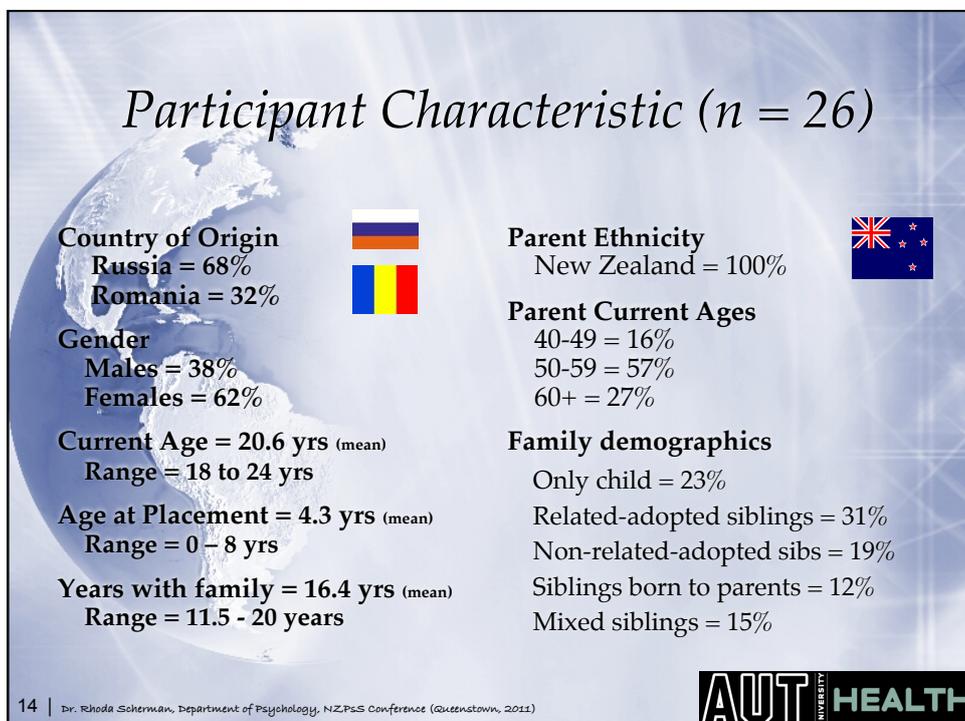


❖ The longer a child is in an institution, the poorer the outcomes.

❖ However, most children experience developmental catch-up, making marked gains in growth and development in their first years with their adoptive families (e.g. Johnson, 2000)

❖ And in adulthood?

13 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



Participant Characteristic (n = 26)

Country of Origin
Russia = 68%
Romania = 32%

Gender
Males = 38%
Females = 62%

Current Age = 20.6 yrs (mean)
Range = 18 to 24 yrs

Age at Placement = 4.3 yrs (mean)
Range = 0 - 8 yrs

Years with family = 16.4 yrs (mean)
Range = 11.5 - 20 years

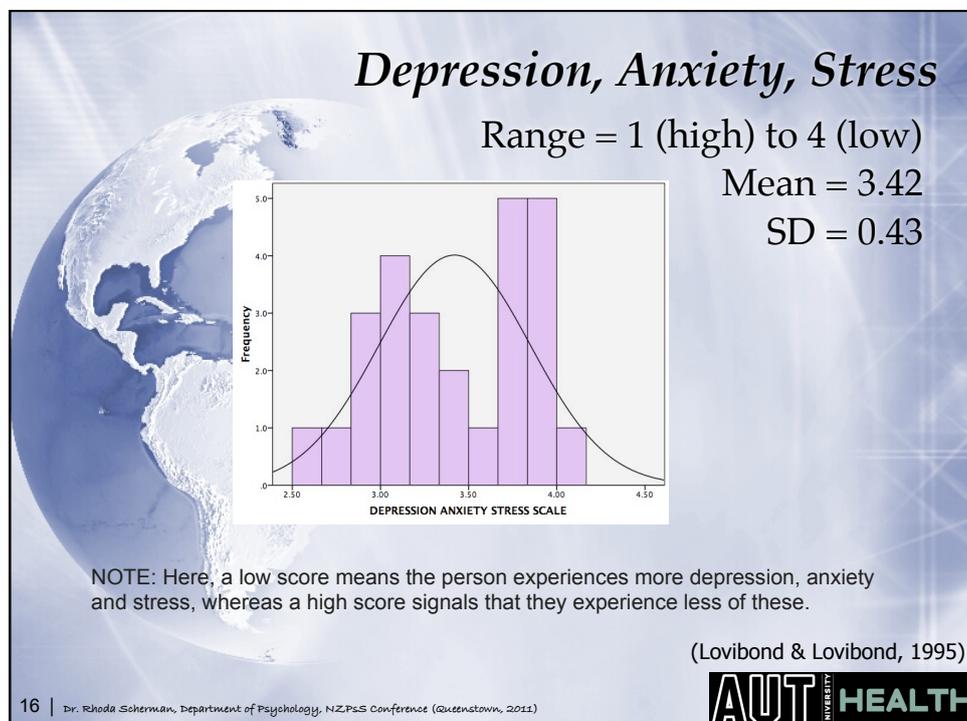
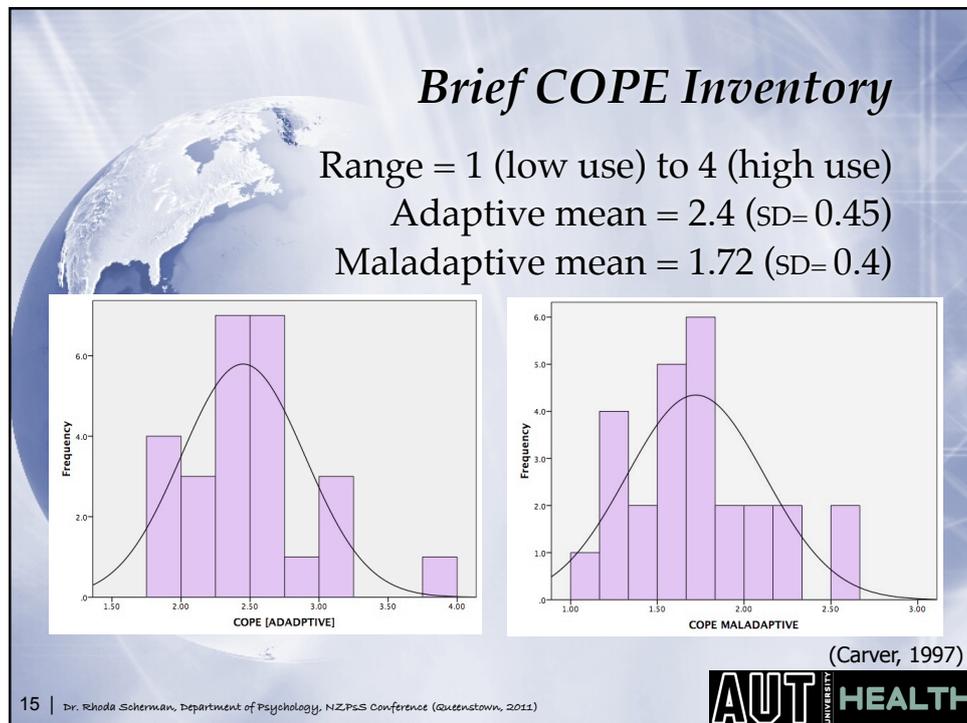
Parent Ethnicity
New Zealand = 100%

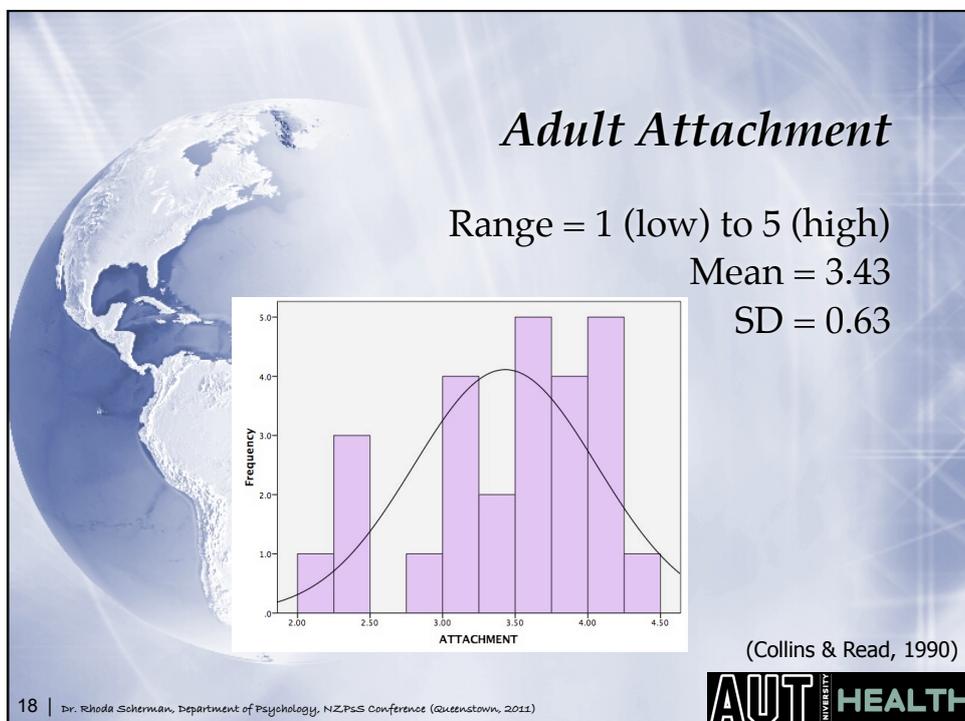
Parent Current Ages
40-49 = 16%
50-59 = 57%
60+ = 27%

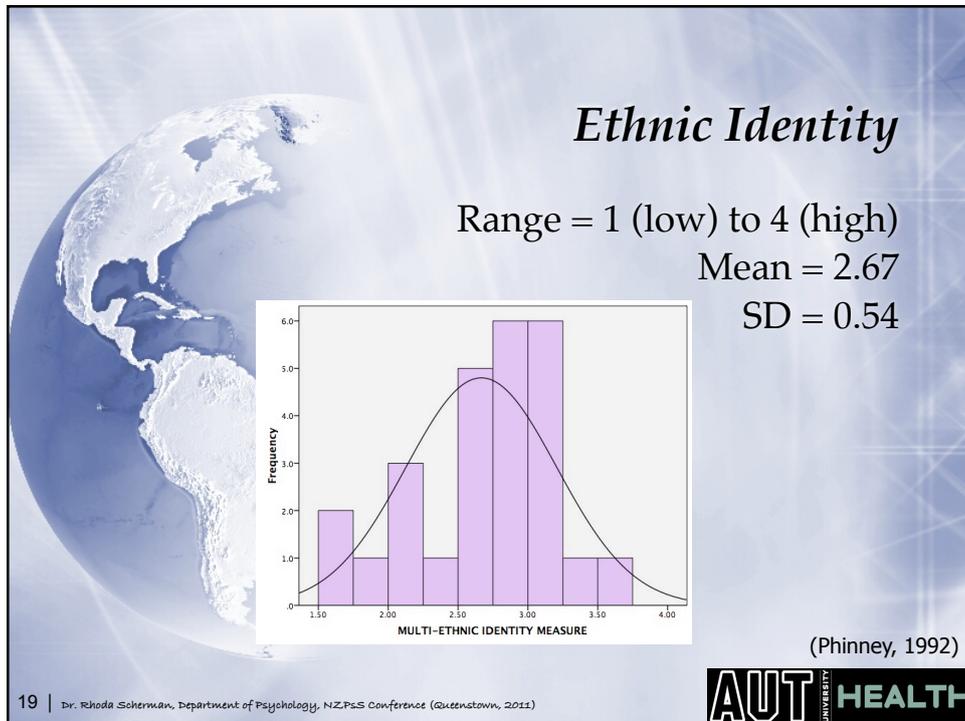
Family demographics
Only child = 23%
Related-adopted siblings = 31%
Non-related-adopted sibs = 19%
Siblings born to parents = 12%
Mixed siblings = 15%

14 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)







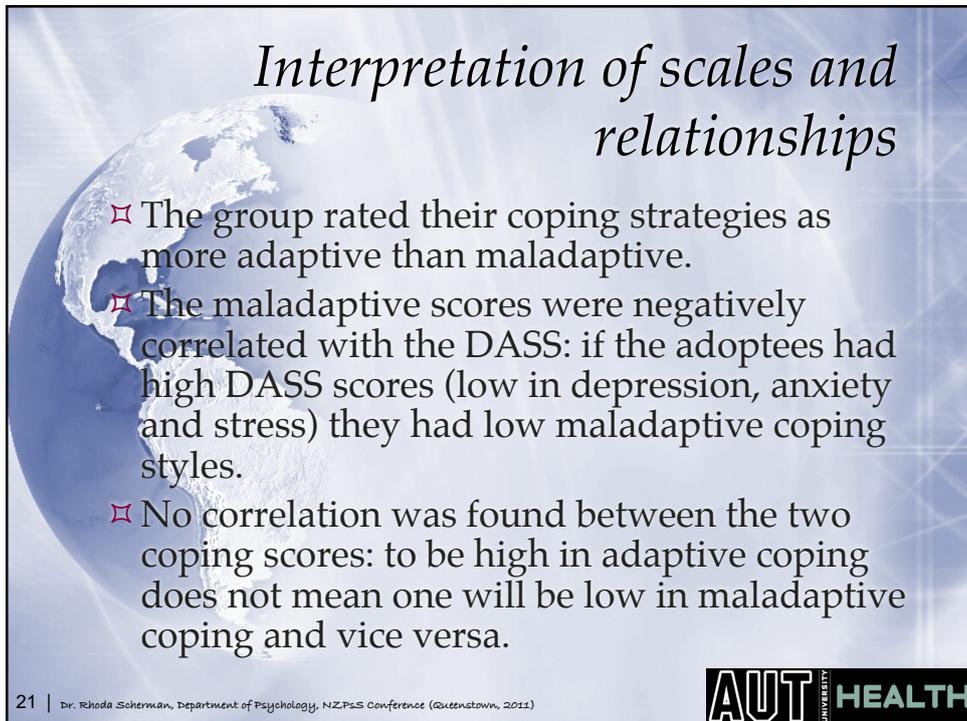


Inferential analyses of measures

		Spearman Correlations					
		ATTACH	MEIM	ROSENBERG	DASS	COPE_MAL	COPE_AD
ATTACH	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	-.131	.525	.592	-.235	.203
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.524	.006	.001	.247	.320
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
MEIM	Correlation Coefficient		1.000	.045	-.139	-.156	-.010
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.	.827	.497	.446	.961
	N		26	26	26	26	26
ROSENBERG	Correlation Coefficient			1.000	.624	-.379	.203
	Sig. (2-tailed)			.	.001	.056	.320
	N			26	26	26	26
DASS	Correlation Coefficient				1.000	-.627	.027
	Sig. (2-tailed)				.	.001	.896
	N				26	26	26
COPE_MAL	Correlation Coefficient					1.000	.152
	Sig. (2-tailed)					.	.460
	N					26	26
COPE_AD	Correlation Coefficient						1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)						.
	N						26

20 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)

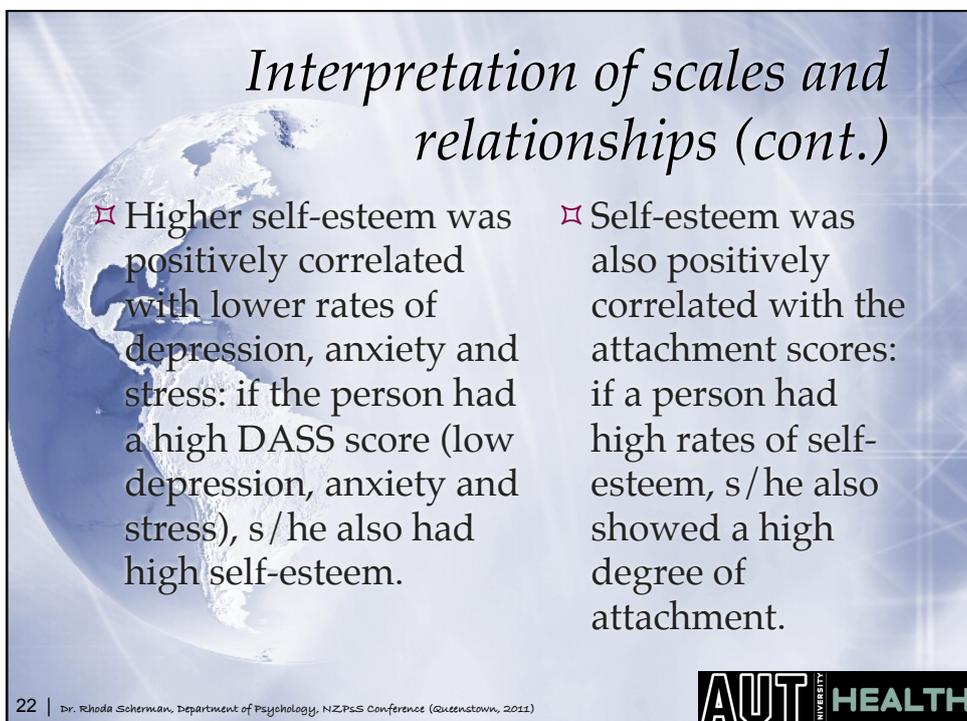
AUT UNIVERSITY HEALTH



Interpretation of scales and relationships

- ✧ The group rated their coping strategies as more adaptive than maladaptive.
- ✧ The maladaptive scores were negatively correlated with the DASS: if the adoptees had high DASS scores (low in depression, anxiety and stress) they had low maladaptive coping styles.
- ✧ No correlation was found between the two coping scores: to be high in adaptive coping does not mean one will be low in maladaptive coping and vice versa.

21 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



Interpretation of scales and relationships (cont.)

- ✧ Higher self-esteem was positively correlated with lower rates of depression, anxiety and stress: if the person had a high DASS score (low depression, anxiety and stress), s/he also had high self-esteem.
- ✧ Self-esteem was also positively correlated with the attachment scores: if a person had high rates of self-esteem, s/he also showed a high degree of attachment.

22 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



Interpretation of scales and relationships (cont.)

- ✧ The ethnicity scores suggest that collectively the group identify themselves as Russian or Romanian to a moderate degree.
- ✧ The index not indicate whether or not participants identified with the NZ culture. (It was not measuring bicultural attitudes.)
- ✧ The ethnic identity index remained independent of the others: how a person ethnically identified himself/herself seems to have no influence on (nor was it influenced by) any of the other measures used.

23 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



Adoptee's Relationships

- ✧ 72% Single
- ✧ 28% De Facto
- ✧ 0% Married / Divorced

Employment

- ✧ 58% Employed
- ✧ 23% Studying
- ✧ 19% Unemployed (NZ mean 17.2%)

Education

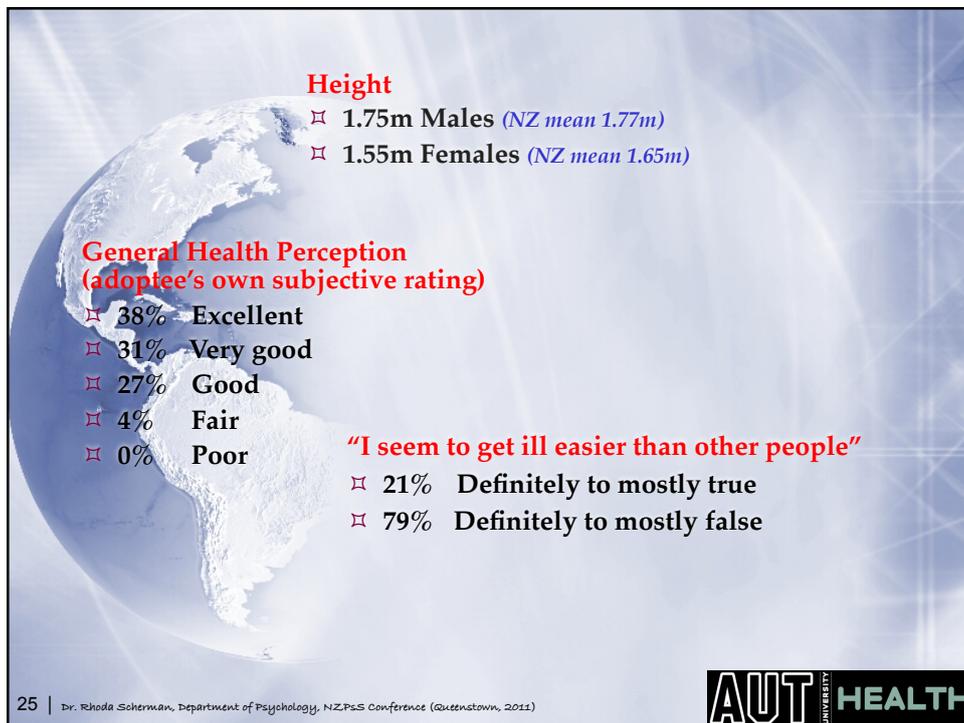
- ✧ 4% No High School Qualification (NZ 18%)
- ✧ 96% Basic High School Qualification (NZ 85%)
- ✧ 35% Final High School / UE (NZ 44%)
- ✧ 27% Currently Engaged In Tertiary Study (NZ 38%)
- ✧ 31% Completed Tertiary Cert / Dip
- ✧ 4% Completed Bachelor Degree or Above (NZ 21%)

NOTE: Values in (brackets) represents New Zealand norms on the same measures*. This data is provided as a point of comparison. However, not all measures had NZ values to compare with.

*Survey questions and comparison data obtained from the Ministry of Health, 2006/07 New Zealand Health Survey, Adult Questionnaire; Date of publication (Online): May 2008

24 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



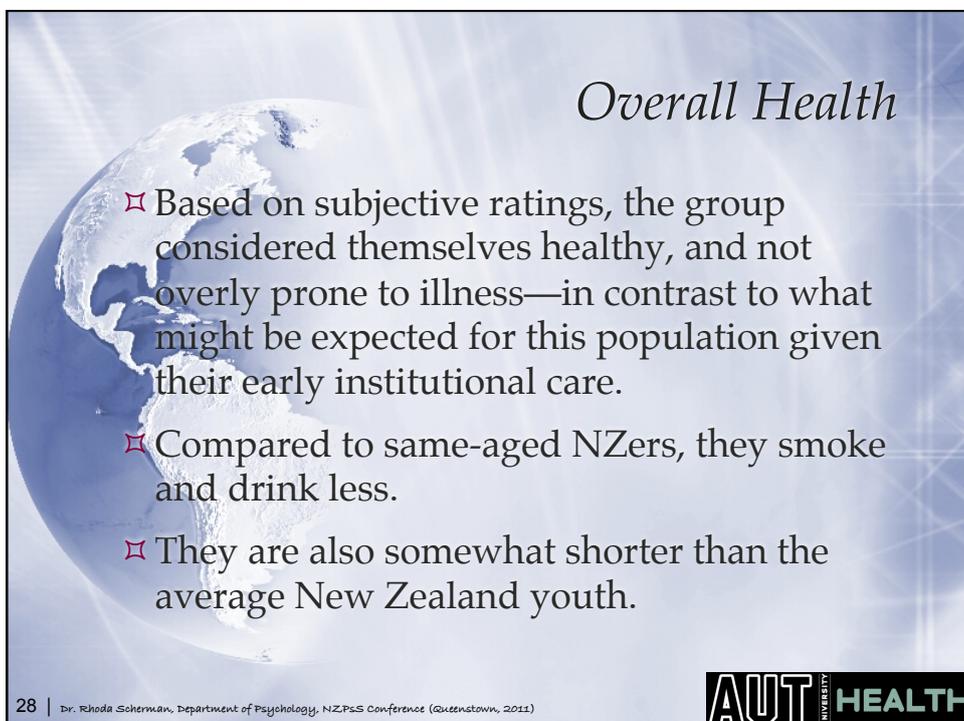




Preliminary Conclusions

- ❑ In light of research on the negative outcomes of early institutionalisation, the preliminary findings of this study are very positive, and bode well for our Russian and Romanian-born adoptees!

27 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



Overall Health

- ❑ Based on subjective ratings, the group considered themselves healthy, and not overly prone to illness—in contrast to what might be expected for this population given their early institutional care.
- ❑ Compared to same-aged NZers, they smoke and drink less.
- ❑ They are also somewhat shorter than the average New Zealand youth.

28 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



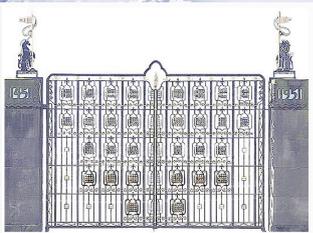
Moderate to high adjustment

- ❑ For all five standardised scales, participants scored above the median of the ranges possible, suggesting moderate to high adjustment.
- ❑ No differences were found between males and females nor between Russian and Romanian adoptions.
- ❑ When analysed together, several significant relationships (correlations) were found. However, the direction of the influence is not known.

29 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZP&S Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



Limitations



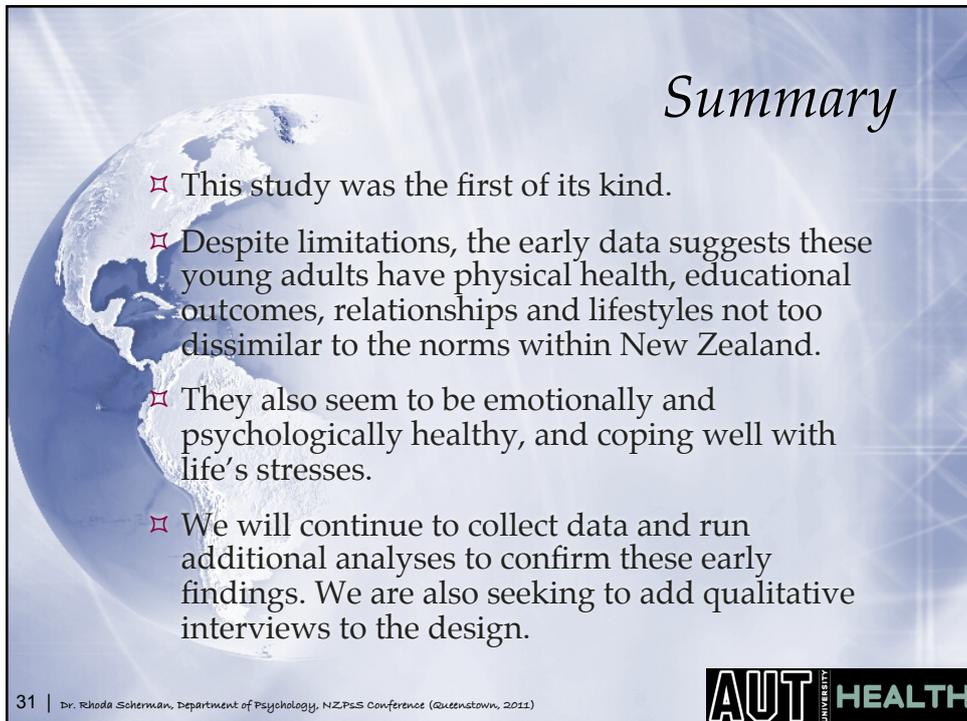
- ❑ Gatekeeping
- ❑ Parental Fear of Pigmalian Effect
- ❑ Response bias

Future directions

- ❑ Larger sample
- ❑ Qualitative focus
- ❑ Experiential
- ❑ Resilience
- ❑ Other suggestions
 - ❑ ??

30 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZP&S Conference (Queenstown, 2011)



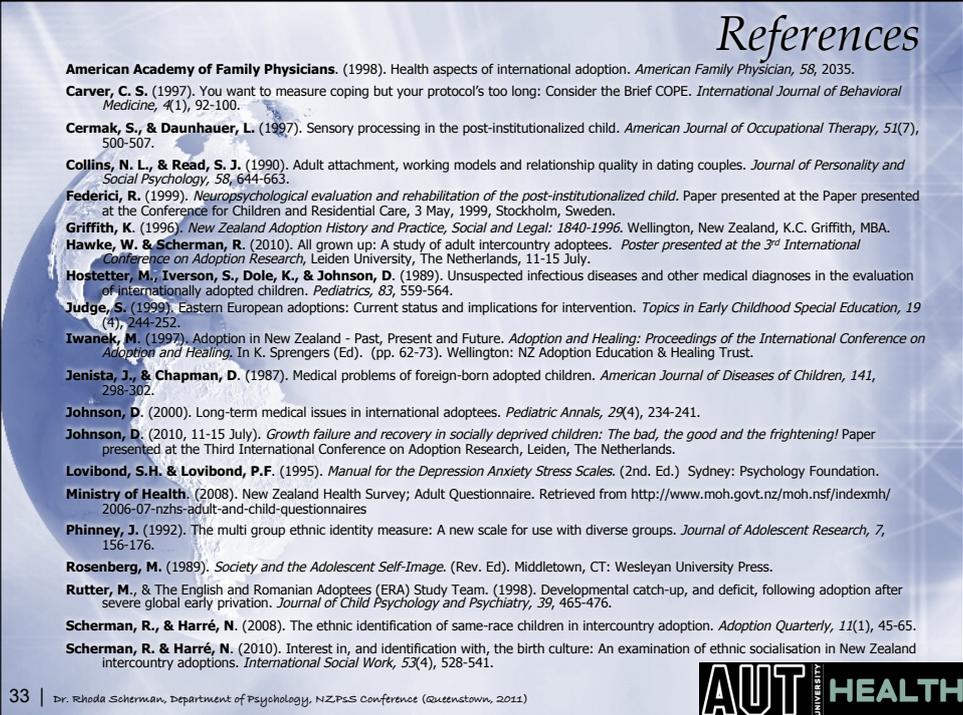


Summary

- ✧ This study was the first of its kind.
- ✧ Despite limitations, the early data suggests these young adults have physical health, educational outcomes, relationships and lifestyles not too dissimilar to the norms within New Zealand.
- ✧ They also seem to be emotionally and psychologically healthy, and coping well with life's stresses.
- ✧ We will continue to collect data and run additional analyses to confirm these early findings. We are also seeking to add qualitative interviews to the design.

31 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZPsS Conference (Queenstown, 2011)





References

American Academy of Family Physicians. (1998). Health aspects of international adoption. *American Family Physician*, 58, 2035.

Carver, C. S. (1997). You want to measure coping but your protocol's too long: Consider the Brief COPE. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, 4(1), 92-100.

Cermak, S., & Daunhauer, L. (1997). Sensory processing in the post-institutionalized child. *American Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 51(7), 500-507.

Collins, N. L., & Read, S. J. (1990). Adult attachment, working models and relationship quality in dating couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 58, 644-663.

Federici, R. (1999). *Neuropsychological evaluation and rehabilitation of the post-institutionalized child*. Paper presented at the Paper presented at the Conference for Children and Residential Care, 3 May, 1999, Stockholm, Sweden.

Griffith, K. (1996). *New Zealand Adoption History and Practice, Social and Legal: 1840-1996*. Wellington, New Zealand, K.C. Griffith, MBA.

Hawke, W. & Scherman, R. (2010). All grown up: A study of adult intercountry adoptees. *Poster presented at the 3rd International Conference on Adoption Research*, Leiden University, The Netherlands, 11-15 July.

Hosletter, M., Iverson, S., Dole, K., & Johnson, D. (1989). Undiscovered infectious diseases and other medical diagnoses in the evaluation of internationally adopted children. *Pediatrics*, 83, 559-564.

Judge, S. (1999). Eastern European adoptions: Current status and implications for intervention. *Topics in Early Childhood Special Education*, 19(4), 244-252.

Iwanek, M. (1997). Adoption in New Zealand - Past, Present and Future. *Adoption and Healing: Proceedings of the International Conference on Adoption and Healing*. In K. Sprengers (Ed). (pp. 62-73). Wellington: NZ Adoption Education & Healing Trust.

Jenista, J., & Chapman, D. (1987). Medical problems of foreign-born adopted children. *American Journal of Diseases of Children*, 141, 298-302.

Johnson, D. (2000). Long-term medical issues in international adoptees. *Pediatric Annals*, 29(4), 234-241.

Johnson, D. (2010, 11-15 July). *Growth failure and recovery in socially deprived children: The bad, the good and the frightening!* Paper presented at the Third International Conference on Adoption Research, Leiden, The Netherlands.

Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond, P.F. (1995). *Manual for the Depression Anxiety Stress Scales*. (2nd. Ed.) Sydney: Psychology Foundation.

Ministry of Health. (2008). New Zealand Health Survey; Adult Questionnaire. Retrieved from <http://www.moh.govt.nz/moh.nsf/indexmh/2006-07-nzhs-adult-and-child-questionnaires>

Phinney, J. (1992). The multi group ethnic identity measure: A new scale for use with diverse groups. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 7, 156-176.

Rosenberg, M. (1989). *Society and the Adolescent Self-Image*. (Rev. Ed). Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

Rutter, M., & The English and Romanian Adoptees (ERA) Study Team. (1998). Developmental catch-up, and deficit, following adoption after severe global early privation. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, 39, 465-476.

Scherman, R., & Harré, N. (2008). The ethnic identification of same-race children in intercountry adoption. *Adoption Quarterly*, 11(1), 45-65.

Scherman, R. & Harré, N. (2010). Interest in, and identification with, the birth culture: An examination of ethnic socialisation in New Zealand intercountry adoptions. *International Social Work*, 53(4), 528-541.

33 | Dr. Rhoda Scherman, Department of Psychology, NZP&S Conference (Queenstown, 2011)

