When will we stop being penny wise and pound foolish?

The case of early intervention from the opposite extreme

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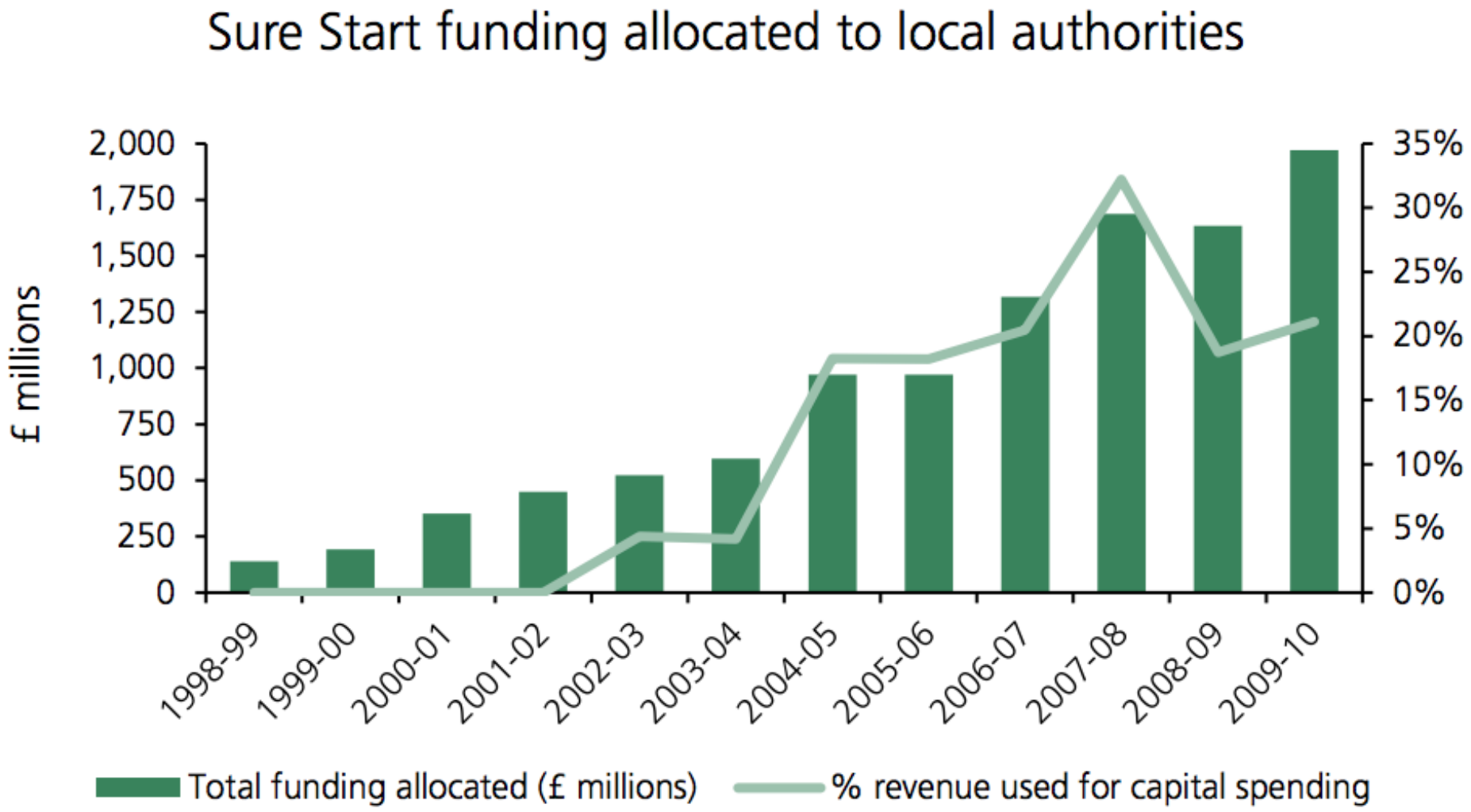
Unicef report 2017

		Overall well-being	Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3	Dimension 4	Dimension 5
		Average rank (all 5 dimensions)	Material well-being (rank)	Health and safety (rank)	Education (rank)	Behaviours and risks (rank)	Housing and environment (rank)
1	Netherlands	2.4	1	5	1	1	4
2	Norway	4.6	3	7	6	4	3
3	Iceland	5	4	1	10	3	7
4	Finland	5.4	2	3	4	12	6
5	Sweden	6.2	5	2	11	5	8
6	Germany	9	11	12	3	6	13
7	Luxembourg	9.2	6	4	22	9	5
8	Switzerland	9.6	9	11	16	11	1
9	Belgium	11.2	13	13	2	14	14
10	Ireland	11.6	17	15	17	7	2
11	Denmark	11.8	12	23	7	2	15
12	Slovenia	12	8	6	5	21	20
13	France	12.8	10	10	15	13	16
14	Czech Republic	15.2	16	8	12	22	18
15	Portugal	15.6	21	14	18	8	17
16	United Kingdom	15.8	14	16	24	15	10

Unicef 2000

		Dimension 1	Dimension 2	Dimension 3	Dimension 4	Dimension 5	Dimension 6
Dimensions of child well-being	Average ranking position (for all 6 dimensions)	Material well-being	Health and safety	Educational well-being	Family and peer relationships	Behaviours and risks	Subjective well-being
Netherlands	4.2	10	2	6	3	3	1
Sweden	5.0	1	1	5	15	1	7
Denmark	7.2	4	4	8	9	6	12
Finland	7.5	3	3	4	17	7	11
Spain	8.0	12	6	15	8	5	2
Switzerland	8.3	5	9	14	4	12	6
Norway	8.7	2	8	11	10	13	8
Italy	10.0	14	5	20	1	10	10
Ireland	10.2	19	19	7	7	4	5
Belgium	10.7	7	16	1	5	19	16
Germany	11.2	13	11	10	13	11	9
Canada	11.8	6	13	2	18	17	15
Greece	11.8	15	18	16	11	8	3
Poland	12.3	21	15	3	14	2	19
Czech Republic	12.5	11	10	9	19	9	17
France	13.0	9	7	18	12	14	18
Portugal	13.7	16	14	21	2	15	14
Austria	13.8	8	20	19	16	16	4
Hungary	14.5	20	17	13	6	18	13
United States	18.0	17	21	12	20	20	–
United Kingdom	18.2	18	12	17	21	21	20

Improvement perhaps due to:



Crisis in child mental health in 2018

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Suicide rates

Warning over rise in London teenager suicides

Number has risen faster in capital than across rest of England and Wales, figures show

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Mental health plans 'failing a generation', say MPs

By Judith Burns
Education reporter

Mental health referrals in English schools rise sharply

NSPCC says number of schools seeking help from NHS mental health services up by more than a third

Mental health
The Observer

Mental health patients still sent hundreds of miles for treatment

Despite government promises to end practice, figures show almost no change since 2016

Education

Children as young as four showing signs of mental health problems, teachers say

Correlation with austerity

Sure Start Children's Centres

Local authority gross spending on Sure Start Children's Centres in England

£ million cash

	Spend/funding for/by individual Sure Start Children's Centres	LA provided or commissioned area-wide services delivered through Children's Centres	LA management costs relating to Children's Centres	**Total**
Outturn				
2010-11	907	305	..	**1,212**
2011-12	818	264	..	**1,082**
2012-13	770	207	..	**977**
2013-14	694	111	42	**848**
2014-15	628	98	42	**768**
2015-16	548	102	41	**691**

Why does austerity impact on children?

WHO factsheet Sept 2016: A number of characteristics of a parent or caregiver may increase the risk of child maltreatment. These include:

- experiencing *financial difficulties*
- having been *maltreated themselves* as a child
- *lacking awareness of child development* or having unrealistic expectations

Child maltreatment is a global problem with serious life-long consequence

Consequences of child maltreatment include impaired lifelong physical and mental health, and the social and occupational outcomes can ultimately slow a country's economic and social development.

World Health Organization

Evolutionary perspective

BJPsych Advances (2016), vol. 22, 36–43 doi: 10.1192/apt.bp.114.014043

ARTICLE

How evolution can help us understand child development and behaviour

Annie Swanepoel, Daniela F. Sieff, Graham Music, John Launer, Michael Reiss & Bernadette Wren

Organisms that are better fitted to their environment (which means better adapted to their environment) have a greater chance of surviving and producing offspring. There is substantial evidence that environmental sensitivity in infants and children helps them to develop in the ways that will be most adaptive, given the circumstances into which they have been born. In particular, we focus on how **the physical and social environment of parents affects their parenting styles, and how an infant's environment (which consists mainly of the parent) affects development and attachment patterns. Although it is ideal to be loved by one's immediate family and reared in circumstances where there are no material shortages, evolution does not prepare us only for the optimum**.

Effects of child maltreatment

Children cared for by a frightened or frightening parent/caregiver, learn that the world is dangerous and no one can be trusted. They also believe that there is something wrong with them which makes them deserve such treatment.

This leads to:

- Increased self-harm and self-sabotaging behavior
- Increased aggression,

making it a lot more difficult to treat them, as they trust nobody. This may be adaptive in a hostile environment, but is not conducive to helping them change.

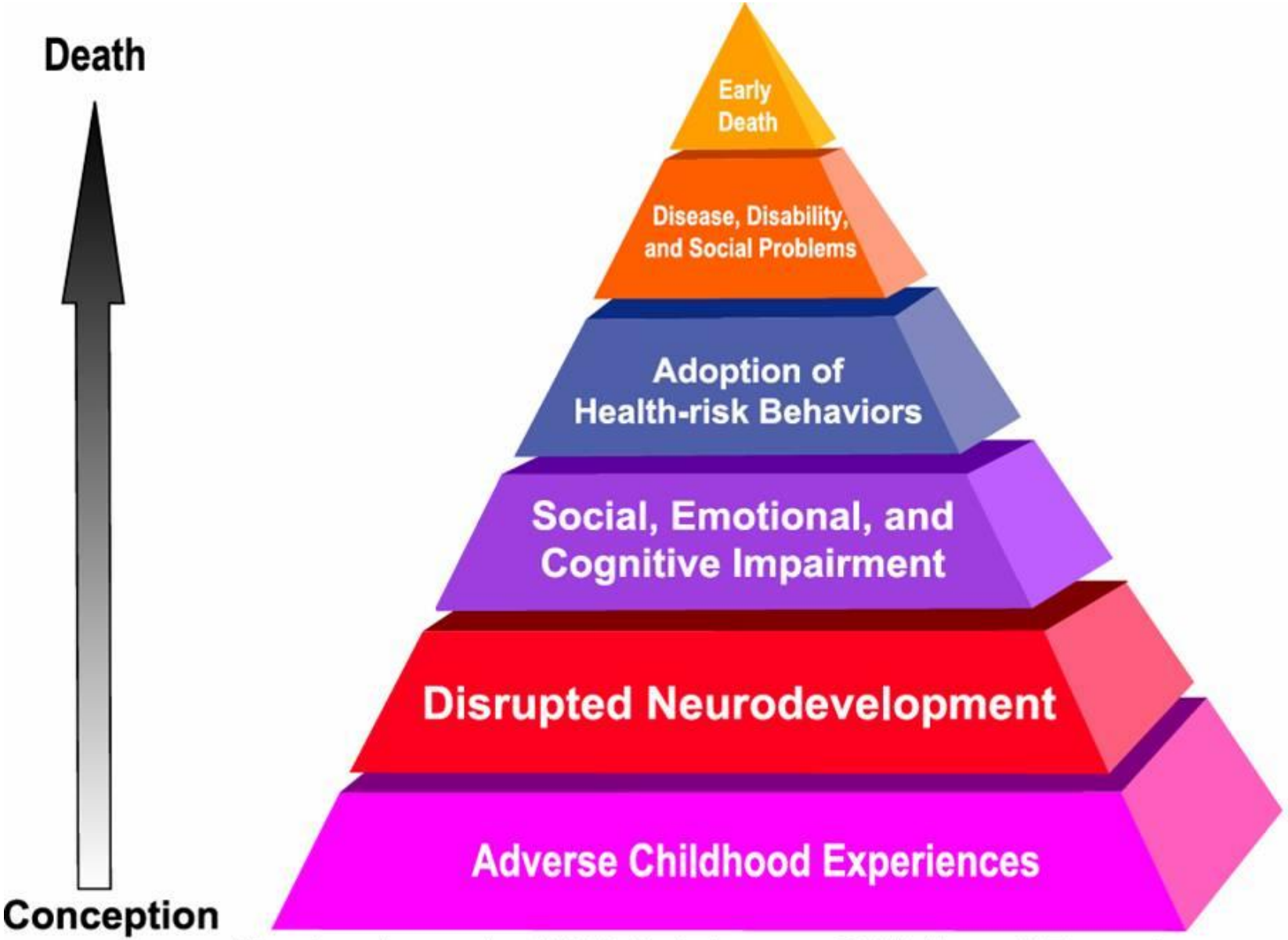
Studies

We know that from the **Minnesota longitudinal study** that:

- by early adulthood most maltreated children met criteria for one or more psychiatric diagnosis
- assuring the quality of early caregiving is critically important in preventing mental health problems

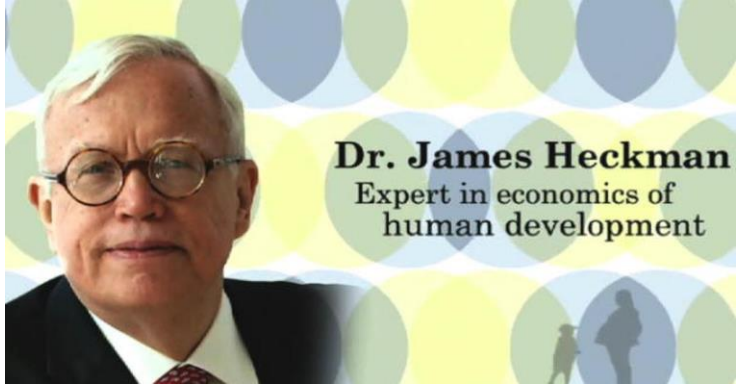
The **ACE (adverse childhood experiences) study** concludes that:

- Child maltreatment was *the most costly public health* issue in the US, exceeding those of cancer or heart disease.
- Eradicating child abuse in the US would reduce the overall rates of depression by more than half and suicide by three-quarters.



Mechanisms by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

Economics



- In the UK, the estimated average lifetime cost of non-fatal child maltreatment by a primary care-giver is £89,390 (with a 95% certainty that the costs fall between £44,896 and £145, 508)
- The largest contributors to this cost are social care costs, short-term health-related costs, and the costs resulting from a lower probability of employment
- James Heckmann, winner of the 2000 Nobel Prize in Economics, has shown that quality early childhood programs that involve parents and promote basic skills in disadvantaged children, leads to a SEVEN-FOLD saving later on in savings in welfare costs, health care costs and more.

Perspective from inpatient low secure unit

The young people I treat are all involuntary under the Mental Health Act, due to serious risk.

They all have suffered trauma and have a view of the world as hostile, not trusting anyone – this makes it difficult for them to accept help.

I often wonder if their suffering could have been prevented with early intervention.

It is a long and difficult route to recovery for them and a very expensive option for society.

Not rocket science

- We know that children are at their most malleable in the first few years of their lives. We need to get it right then.
- A stitch in time, saves nine.
- Stopping services for young children and families is penny wise and pound foolish.
- Early intervention is crucial, kind and cost-effective.

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Thank you for listening