

Can we identify school refusal?

Dr Vaso Totsika

v.totsika@ucl.ac.uk

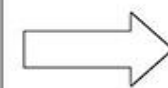
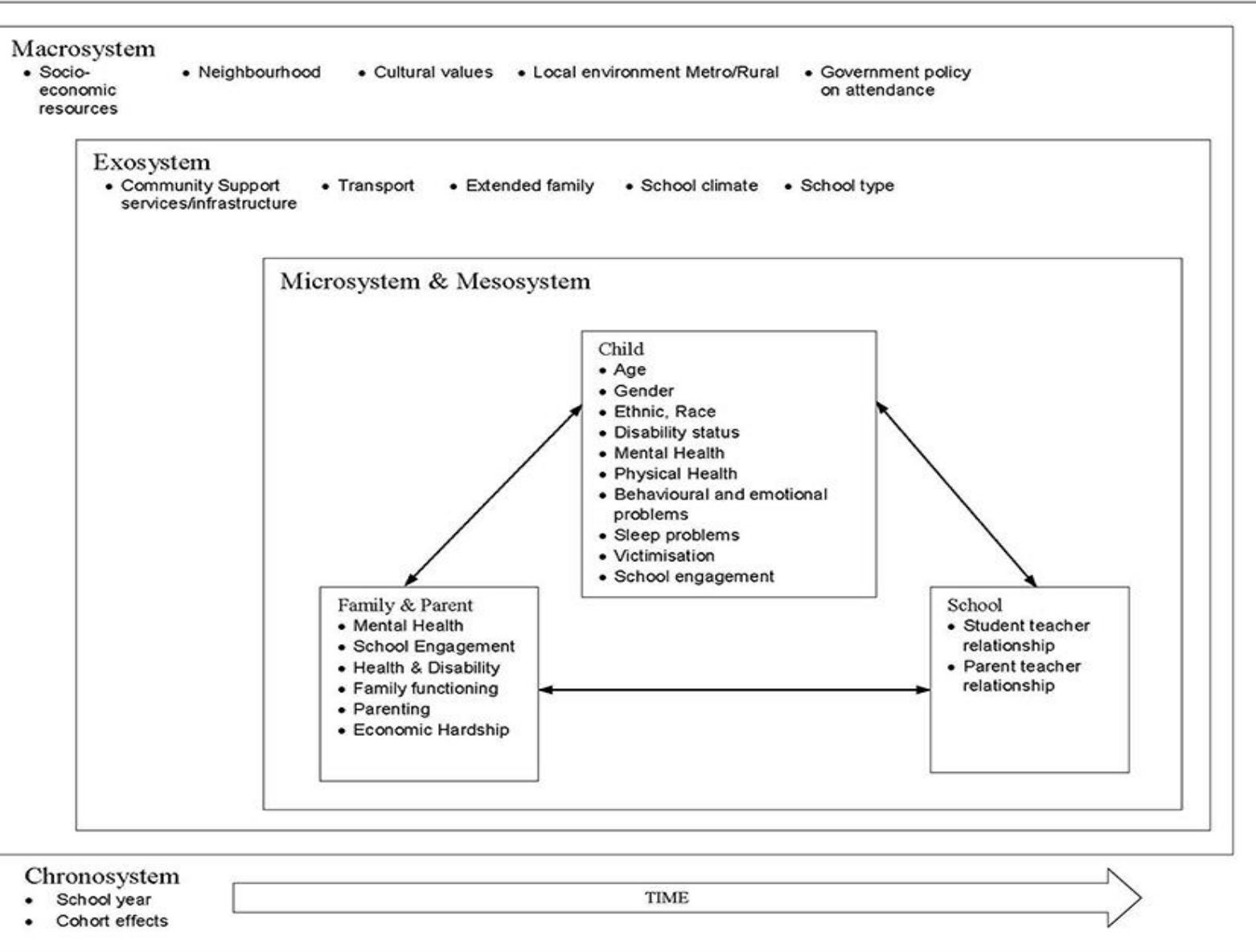
[@vasototsika](#)

School refusal in ASD: is identification possible?

1. What does the research evidence say? -10 minutes
2. What do the experts say? – 10 minutes
 - Should we aim for early identification? – 5 minutes
 - School refusal in the post-COVID world – 5 minutes

Debrief – 10 minutes

A complex *systemic* phenomenon



School Attendance or Absence

Melvin et al [2019](#)
Frontiers in Education

Country/study	N	ND condition	Factors associated	Factors examined
Japan/ Kurita 1991	135	ASD/ID	ID –less likely Higher IQ in ASD – more likely	Demographic factors; family factors; medical history; maternal neuroticism
Norway/ Munkhaugen 2017;2019	78	ASD	Illness in other family members Initiation Plan/organise Anxiety/depression Withdrawn/depressed Somatic complaints Thought problems Internalising problems Total CBCL	Urban area; maternal education; 1-parent family; renting; having additional diagnoses. child age; IQ score; type of ASD diagnosis; social responsiveness scores; shifting; inhibition; emotional control; working memory; organisation of material; monitor; social problems; attention problems; rule-breaking behaviours, aggressive behaviours, externalising problems
UK/ Totsika 2020	313	ASD/ID	Older age	Child gender, intellectual disability, unemployed household, single-parent HHD, low educ qualifications; more children with disabilities; total no of children in HHD, mainstream school, independent transport to school, moving schools, day miss
Australia/ in prep	602	ID/ASD	Gender, Disruptive Behaviour, School Connectedness, Family functioning Student-teacher close relationship (n:243)	Adaptive skills, child age, ASD diagnosis, anxiety, school size, rural location, transport to school, deprivation, single parent HHD, parent attitudes to education, parent involvement in school, parent mental health, parent education, hardship, parent disability; total number of children in HHD (teacher relationship, school climate and peer victimization)

1) Group Discussion: 10 minutes

- From your own experience so far: Who are the autistic children most likely to be school 'refusers'?
- What are the child, family, school or system factors you see more often when you encounter school refusal in autistic students?



2) Group discussion on early identification – 5 minutes

- Should we try to identify the future school refusers? Is this ethical? Is it practical? Should we be singling out autistic children more likely to refuse school for early intervention?

3) School refusal in a COVID world: 5 minutes

Half of UK Parents Uncomfortable with Children Returning to School after COVID-19 Lockdown

Only two thirds of parents currently intend to send their children back to school next month, according to a poll carried out by Redfield & Wilton Strategies published a few days ago. A YouGov survey earlier this month found well over half (57 per cent)

Returning to school 'critical' for son's mental health

Mr Johnson's appeal acts on the advice of England's chief medical officer who said reopening schools brings less risk of long-term harm than keeping children at home.

Reopening could be very stressful for children with autism

Preparing children with special needs for school in September has to start now

Wrapping it all up...

....Thank you for your participation