Types of Psychopathology Research

- Developmental Psychopathology – study of multi-level trajectories to normal/abnormal behavior across time.
  - Equifinality: Multiple paths can lead to the same outcome.
  - Multifinality: The same path can lead to multiple outcomes.
  - Resilience: Factors that protect against dysfunction after exposure to chronic adversity or acute trauma
  - Context: Factors external to the individual that channel developmental trajectories

Types of Psychopathology Research

- Stress-Vulnerability Research: Study of interplay between person and environment in predicting pathology
  - Risk factors or diatheses: factors that leave people vulnerable to a disorder when experiencing environmental triggers.
  - Necessary factor: an etiological factor that MUST be present for the disorder to occur.
  - Sufficient factor: etiological factor whose presence guarantees that the disorder will occur.
  - Contributory factor: increases the likelihood that a disorder will occur
Specifying the Construct

- Initial research: broad conceptualization
- Later research: more narrow conceptualization

Research Designs

- Prospective-longitudinal (cohort) design
  - Single group cohort design
    - Identify a single group and follow over time
  - Multiple group cohort design
    - Groups differ in whether they have a characteristic or experience thought to increase vulnerability to the outcome of interest

Research Designs

- Accelerated longitudinal (cohort) design
  - High risk prospective longitudinal design
    - Follow a high risk cohort of individuals to see if they develop the outcome of interest
    - May also include a low risk cohort
  - Multi-cohort Longitudinal Design
    - Study multiple groups who vary in age
    - Shortens to time to completion and reduces cohort or period effects
Accelerated multi-cohort longitudinal design

Graph adapted from Kadzin, 1999

Strengths of longitudinal designs
- Establishes the order of events
- Examine all combinations of people who did and did not experience the hypothesized antecedents, and who did and did not show the outcome
- (Generate hypotheses based on within and between group differences)

Limitations of longitudinal designs
- Time
- Attrition
- Resources
- Not optimal for outcomes with low base rates
- Cannot infer causality
- Possible influence of cohort and period effects
Research Designs

- Case-control design: study groups who vary in whether they have the OUTCOME of interest (cases) or not (controls).
- Cross-sectional case control design: compare on current characteristics and experiences
- Retrospective case control design: assess information about past characteristics and experiences
- Follow-back study: Use archival records to study past experiences and characteristics

Strengths of Case-Control Designs

- Can study infrequent outcome
- Short time frame
- Fewer resources required
- Little or no attrition
- Good for preliminary research

Limitations of Case-Control Designs

- Limited conclusions
- Sampling bias
- Recall bias (retrospective designs)
- Quality of record-keeping (follow-back designs)
Sampling and grouping in psychopathology research

- From which population will you draw your sample?
- How will you select your sample?
  - Random selection
  - Non-random population based sampling
  - Stratified sampling procedures (random or nonrandom)
  - Convenience sampling
  - Volunteer-based community sampling

Sampling and grouping in psychopathology research

- How will you delineate groups?
- What modality of assessment will you use?
- Will you use a continuous or categorical method?
- Will you use participant matching?
- Which is the appropriate control group? (Which comparison do you want to make?)