

Reflections on the Field of School Attendance Problems: For the Times They Are a-Changing?

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This article presents reflections on the seven articles included in this special series. The classification of school attendance problems (SAPs) based on structured checklists of SAP types (school refusal, truancy, school withdrawal, and school exclusion) together with functional analysis opens the way for establishing norms and social referents. We discuss how authorized nonattendance can also be problematic if it is persistent, and that it is important to take this type of SAP into account if the field is to effectively understand and respond to the complex range of bio-psycho-socio-cultural determinants of absenteeism. We highlight other gaps in the current literature, one of which is the lack of attention to evidence-based prevention and early intervention strategies. Avenues for future research are suggested, with emphasis on the need for pragmatic approaches to address the complexities of SAPs. Promising work is beginning to address the SAPs that are prevalent in special populations such as those with autism spectrum disorder. Overall, our reflections highlight the incremental changes that have characterized the field, exemplified by this series of articles, and the promise of transformational change in tackling the major challenge of SAPs as research in the field continues.

THIS special series on school refusal and other school attendance problems (SAPs) covers the broad fields of classification (Heyne, Gren-Landell, Melvin, & Gentle-Genitty, 2019, this issue), predictors and early identification with implications for prevention and early intervention (Chu, Guarino, Mele, O'Connell, & Coto, 2019, this issue; Ingul et al., 2019, this issue) and approaches to management and treatment, particularly for school refusal, which is the type of SAP associated with emotional distress (Brouwer-Borghuis, Heyne, Sauter, & Scholte, 2019, this issue; McKay-Brown et al., 2019, this issue; Melvin & Gordon, 2019, this issue; Reissner et al., 2019, this issue). Together, the articles are extremely helpful in summarizing contemporary knowledge and highlighting novel and exciting clinical practice and approaches to service delivery to improve youths' school attendance. The articles also reveal a research agenda necessary to drive change, and to justify the implementation of service delivery.

Depending on the readers' perspective, the articles highlight two sides of a coin that are not mutually exclusive. The side of the coin that a reader will focus on is likely to be correlated with whether that reader is more of a Bob Dylan fan—"the times they are a-changing"—or a fan of Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr—"the more things change, the more they stay the same"; or, as we like to say in French, "plus ça *change*, plus c'est la même chose." Because we (BJT; WKS) are admirers of both Dylan and Karr, we have tried as much as possible to present both sides of the coin in our reflections. We aim specifically to harvest the novel points from the articles, to indicate gaps in knowledge, and to delineate the implications of several of these points and knowledge gaps for improving school attendance and future research. At the same time, when appropriate, we point out other efforts conducted in the past that aimed to address similar points and gaps, how these efforts fared, and, more important, what lessons were learned.

Of note, we both had the honor and privilege to participate in the Lorentz Center Workshop "School Absenteeism: Universal Problem Seeks Gold Standard Solutions" in March 2018, mentioned by David Heyne in his Introduction to this special series. We also had the pleasure to serve as co-chairs and co-discussants of several topics covered during the Lorentz Center Workshop. Many of those topics are addressed in the articles contained in this special series. The participants of

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this influential workshop and their affiliations are listed alphabetically in the footnote.¹ However, the views we express in this discussion are ours, and the participants may or may not agree with our points of emphasis. A position paper reflecting the collective deliberations and proposals that arose from the Lorentz Center Workshop is forthcoming.

Definition and Classification of SAPs: Establishing Norms and Social Referents

School attendance problems were recognized long before compulsory education. Shakespeare described “the whining school boy . . . creeping like a snail unwillingly to school” (*As You Like It*, Act 2). Truancy was described by Healy (1915) when referring to delinquents. Broadwin (1932) wrote about children who were afraid to go to school, staying “near their mother” (p. 254), to describe what is now classified as school refusal. It has also been recognized for a long time that persistent absence from school has seriously deleterious effects on youth and is due to a complex range of “non problematic” and “problematic” explanations (Kearney & Silverman, 1996). Calls for a more “explicable, reliable and applicable” classification of SAPs are not new (Kearney & Silverman, 1996). Longstanding attempts to tie SAPs to specific psychopathological conditions (e.g., the connection between truancy and conduct disorder and the connection between school refusal and anxiety disorders) have been confounded by issues of comorbidity, the arbitrary metrics of diagnostic tests, and the heterogeneity of SAPs. The earlier calls for rational change in defining and classifying the heterogeneity of SAPs can still be heard. This special series provides illuminating perspectives toward an effort to resolve these issues.

The first article, by Heyne et al. (2019; *this issue*), provides a scholarly and comprehensive summary of the development of approaches to defining types of SAPs and analyzing the function of nonattendance. Definitions are provided for nonproblematic (authorized) and

problematic (unauthorized) school absenteeism. Further definitions and classification of SAPs into school refusal, truancy, school withdrawal, and school exclusion are suggested by the authors as a path toward establishing a more solid base for comparative research. According to the authors, the study of these types of SAPs can be facilitated by using the authors’ new screening checklist of the four SAP types (School Non-Attendance CheckList: SNACK). Heyne et al. also acknowledge the complementary analysis of SAPs based on the principles of functional analysis, introduced by Kearney and Silverman (1990). This functional analytic approach supports the development of personalized treatment based on the youth’s functional profile. Individual functional profiles for SAPs can be facilitated by use of the School Refusal Assessment Scale (Kearney & Silverman, 1993), and its revision (SRAS-R; Kearney, 2002). Heyne et al. further emphasize the importance of conducting a broader assessment that moves beyond functional analysis, particularly one that also captures contextual factors such as the family, the school, and socio-cultural factors.

Overall, there are exciting changes suggested by Heyne et al.’s (2019; *this issue*) writing about definitions and classification. Their emphasis on the nuances in differentiating between SAPs is reasonable and it is plausible that this emphasis can help bring order to a very muddled area. Moreover, Heyne et al. do an exceptional job in providing an overview of past themes of school nonattendance, including early perspectives of nonattendance as a societal problem (illegal truancy), then as a clinical entity (psychoneurotic truancy/school refusal; Broadwin, 1932; Partridge, 1939), and later as school phobia (Johnson et al., 1941) “defined by an overdependent mother-child relationship and divided into neurotic and characterological subtypes” (Coolidge et al., 1957; Estes et al., 1956). Similar definitions (Berg et al., 1969) and dichotomies (Kennedy, 1965; Marine, 1968; Sperling, 1967) followed, as did Kearney and Silverman’s (1990) functional approach to classification.

While we acknowledge the exciting changes suggested by Heyne and colleagues’ ideas, we are reminded of Kazdin’s (2006) reference to Juliet in Shakespeare’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Juliet asks, “What’s in a name? that which we call a rose / By any other name would smell as sweet.” We agree wholeheartedly with Kazdin’s observation that “Actually, a lot is in a name!” The field’s focus on developing definitions and classifications of school nonattendance, including the operationalization of classifications with measures such as the SRAS-R and the newer SNACK, is important, and names do matter. However, we suggest that what is most critical is the development of empirically established norms and real-world referents for school nonattendance problems. For example, let us say that we adopt the nuanced approach

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to definitions and classification put forth by Heyne et al. (2019; *this issue*), how would we go about calibrating observed scores on the SNACK to the values for a specific reference group such as second-grade students in the U.S. or fourth-grade students in the Netherlands? What would that score mean in terms of academic functioning or family functioning for an adolescent girl or a boy in the first grade? It is beyond the scope of this article to discuss the complexities of the issues we allude to here, so we encourage the interested reader to see Blanton and Jaccard (2006) and Kazdin (1999) for eloquent discussions of the issues.

A basic assumption that requires consideration as the field proffers change via new models of classification and differentiation is the assumption that authorized school nonattendance is not problematic. The related assumption is that it does not need to be the focus of prevention and intervention efforts. Each of the articles in this issue makes some reference to the immediate and long-term adverse outcomes of persistent nonattendance in individuals' academic skills, mental health, quality of life, social participation, and employment. These adverse outcomes are a considerable financial cost to society and a drain on social capital. There is, however, little evidence that these adverse outcomes are predicated by unauthorized rather than authorized absenteeism. For example, the so-called authorized expulsion of a student from school for behavioral reasons, and prolonged absence due to a chronic illness, are likely to increase the chance of adverse outcomes. We suggest that *all* school nonattendance has potential to be problematic and therefore is worthy of attention, and that the analysis of the form and function of all instances of absenteeism be the subject of study.

It has long been recognized that the way in which definitions of SAPs are operationalized has a "profound influence on prevalence estimates" (King et al., 1995, p. 19). It also has an influence on the comparability and relevance of norms, social referents, economic impact, and the development of service delivery and social policy. Persistent absenteeism is sometimes defined as absence for 25% of total school time for at least 2 weeks, or 10 days' absence in any 15-week school period (Kearney, 2008), but an alternative operationalization used is "more than 10 percent of possible sessions in a period" (DfE (Department for Education), 2016). Existing norms for defining the prevalence and social referents of SAPs are often parochial and vary widely between countries and regions with respect to the definitions and methods used to capture data, preventing reliable and valid comparison (Chu et al., 2019, *this issue*; Heyne et al., 2019, *this issue*). Data on the population prevalence of the four types of SAPs defined by Heyne et al. are not available. Furthermore, in special populations such as indigenous (First Nation) youth, refugees, and youth with neurodevelop-

mental disorders such as learning disability/intellectual disability, autism spectrum disorders (ASD), and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), data on SAP norms are either unavailable or limited.

The Department for Education in the U.K. published national data on pupil absence in all schools in England during six half terms in 2013–14. These data are beginning to provide some understanding of the rates of all types of SAPs combined (an overall rate of 4.6%), they allow comparison between authorized versus unauthorized school absenteeism, and they provide information about absenteeism among youth with special educational needs noted above (e.g., learning disability, intellectual disability), and those from low socioeconomic status (DfE (Department for Education), 2017). An understanding of the types of SAP as proposed by Heyne et al. (2019, *this issue*) will require some commonality in the form of official attendance data recorded across jurisdictions and between countries. The Department for Education model in the U.K. may provide some leads for enhancing consistency in the recording of absence and its social referents.

Prediction and Identification: Preventing Absenteeism and Intervening Early

The second article in this series (Chu et al., 2019, *this issue*) provides an elegant analysis of the relatively short-term but high costs to the education provider, based on school refusal observed in three school districts local to Rutgers University in the U.S. This ground-breaking analysis is limited to the administrative costs incurred in responding to youth with school refusal. It is likely that much larger economic costs would be demonstrated in a more comprehensive study of the short- and long-term financial costs to the individual, family, government agencies, and state or country administration, as a result of all types of SAPs. The serious adverse individual and community consequences of SAPs speak to the critical need to focus on prevention and early intervention. This special series addresses the topics of identification and treatment, representing Tiers 1 and 3 in the Response to Intervention model for managing school absenteeism (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). It is noteworthy that the special issue has little to say about how to deliver early interventions (Tier 2).

There is well-established empirical evidence that targeted preventive interventions have at least modest effects for anxious youth (Grossman & Hughes, 1992). This evidence may also be relevant to youth at risk for persistent school refusal, because youth refusing to attend school often experience anxiety. There are less compelling data for the benefit of early intervention for youth with antisocial behavior, although early intervention for

youth at risk of truancy associated with antisocial behavior could prove effective (Heyne, Sauter, & Maynard, 2015; Lösel & Beelmann, 2003). Currently, the systematic implementation of evidence-based approaches to the prevention of SAPs or early intervention for forms of SAPs such as school refusal or truancy remains an aspiration.

The second article (Chu et al., 2019, *this issue*) and the third article (Ingul et al., 2019, *this issue*) introduce school-based models for the assessment of risk and for early identification of school refusal, and to some extent the truancy form of SAPs as well. The considerable literature on the complex bio-psycho-socio-cultural factors involving the child, parent, school, and community that interact in the development of SAPs is acknowledged in these articles. What is still missing from our understanding of risk factors are those factors contributing to school withdrawal and school exclusion, as well as a better understanding of the determinants of so-called authorized nonattendance. The complex interaction of multiple determinants of absenteeism necessitates a systematic approach to early intervention involving inclusive partnerships and multitiered systems of identification and support, such as that presented in the second article (Chu et al., 2019). The involvement of families, teachers, school administrators, and education bureaucracies in prevention and early intervention initiatives may seem self-evident, but it is acknowledged by the authors as being costly and difficult to administer and maintain.

Two important tasks will need to be achieved before policymakers and government can be convinced of the imperative to support national early identification and intervention programs. First, it will be necessary to determine the substantial short- and long-term economic costs and burden of absenteeism. Second, although the second and third articles in this series hint at the benefits of early identification and intervention, more robust short- and long-term evidence of population benefits for youth, families, and the community needs to be obtained. According to the third article (Ingul et al., 2019, *this issue*), evidence is becoming more compelling “that every day (absent) counts” (Hancock et al., 2013). Therefore, the development of evidence-based, system-wide early interventions and treatments is imperative.

A compelling argument could be made for providing high-intensity treatment for a SAP to “nip it in the bud,” much like providing a high-intensity CBT for youth anxiety, but the mental health field faces a crisis in which demand for treatment massively exceeds available resources (Kazdin & Blase, 2011). Efficient treatment delivery approaches, including the use of low-intensity treatments, need to be developed if the field of SAPs is to meet growing demand. The stepped-care approach offers a substantial reduction (almost 50%) in clinician time that would enable clinicians to allocate more resources

to youth who need more intensive treatment. It also offers a substantial reduction in time that youth and families invest in treatment (e.g., Pettit et al., 2017; van der Leeden et al., 2011). It will be important to also conduct cost analyses of stepped-care approaches for SAPs, as was recently done for youth anxiety disorders (Yeguez et al., 2018). The Response to Intervention model of Kearney and Graczyk (2014) includes stepped care in its differentiation between Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions, and the evaluation of such a stepped-care approach for SAPs holds tremendous promise.

Management and Treatment of SAPs: Improving Outcomes and Testing Mechanisms of Change

Of the topics addressed in the special series, the one that clearly awaits transformational “second order” change (Watzlawick et al., 2011) is the treatment of persistent absenteeism. Articles four (Reissner et al., 2019, *this issue*), five (Brouwer-Borghuis et al., 2019, *this issue*), and six (McKay-Brown et al., 2019, *this issue*) propose new approaches to treatment. Two of these interventions are focused on the school refusal form of SAPs, while one also addresses truancy. No attention is paid to systematic approaches to tackle school withdrawal and school exclusion or the poorly defined problem of prolonged authorized absenteeism. There is clearly a challenge in finding more universally effective forms of intervention for all types of persistent absenteeism.

A centerpiece of the four articles on treatment (articles four to seven) is CBT for the treatment of internalizing disorders (anxiety and depression). Given that the definition of the school refusal form of SAPs includes the presence of emotional distress, it is assumed that CBT will therefore be an effective treatment. This assumption seems not to hold for a significant minority of youth with persistent school refusal (Heyne et al., 2015). A further assumption that CBT may be effective for the management of externalizing disorders associated with truancy is even less well supported by existing evidence. What is beyond doubt is that CBT approaches do not help a considerable minority of youth with problematic school refusal and/or truancy.

The treatment articles in this series present novel interventions that are multimodal (Reissner et al., 2019, *this issue*), offering alternative education (Brouwer-Borghuis et al., 2019, *this issue*), including a wraparound transitional classroom (McKay-Brown et al., 2019). Multidisciplinary teams work in partnership with the family and school to help the young person transition back to some form of full-time educational program. The assumption is that multimodal, multisystem, and wrap-around intensive team approaches are essential to effective outcomes. Preliminary evidence is presented for efficacy, but robust evidence for effectiveness and cost

benefit is needed. Further evidence of the feasibility of these treatments for population implementation and maintenance will be required to justify and facilitate adoption by education departments and mental health services.

In articles four to six, the interrelated concepts of motivation, self-efficacy, resilience, and connectedness are presented as youth characteristics that predict response to intervention and favorable outcomes. Some evidence is offered for the inclusion of treatment strategies to promote the development and expression of these psychological characteristics but component analysis studies are required to justify the inclusion of these strategies.

In the seventh article, [Melvin and Gordon \(2019, this issue\)](#) review the evidence and issues associated with adding medication to improve the outcomes of CBT for the treatment of persistent school refusal. Their conclusions largely mirror those of another recent review of pharmacological treatments for school refusal, which found that the majority of trials predated the development of newer drugs and had significant methodological limitations, particularly in having insufficient statistical power ([Tobon, Reed, Taylor, & Bloch, 2018](#)). The use of other medications that have an evidence-based role in the treatment of some specific neurodevelopmental conditions, such as ADHD, Tourette Disorder, and disruptive behavior associated with ASD, which all might contribute to school refusal, truancy, school withdrawal, and particularly school exclusion, warrants consideration and research. The need to carefully explore the details of literature on treatment for school refusal that includes pharmacotherapy harkens us back two decades ago when there was similarly much excitement and buzz surrounding the initial pharmacotherapy studies for youth anxiety disorders. In a review of this research, [Kearney and Silverman \(1998\)](#) included in their title a key caveat: "Things are not as they seem." That is, the use of medication might prove promising but considerably more research addressing past study limitations is needed before the field can draw valid inferences about its use, whether alone or in combination with CBT or other psychological interventions.

In addition to pharmacotherapy approaches, there are other intervention approaches that we hope will be covered in the next special series on the topic of SAPs. For example, in the wider field of youth mental health there is robust evidence for the effectiveness of parent education and skills training approaches. These interventions are applicable to a wide range of family circumstances and youth emotional and behavioral problems such as anxiety, depression, and antisocial behavior ([Luby, Barch, Whalen, Tillman, & Freedland, 2018](#); [Silverman et al., in press](#)) as well as neurodevelopmental conditions

such as ASD and ADHD ([Ruane & Carr, 2018](#); [Tonge, Brereton, Kiomall, MacKinnon, & Rinehart, 2014](#)). The interventions are effective at a population level, producing sustained improvement in youth behavior and a reduction in parental stress, although more research is required to understand mediating and moderating factors, and directional patterns of change ([Silverman & Pettit, 2018](#)). Families are included in a number of the treatment approaches presented in this issue but more specific research on the application of tailored parent education and skills training programs for parents of youth with SAPs is indicated.

As part of such efforts, it will be important to carefully attend to the measurement of clinically significant therapeutic change, especially when psychological outcomes such as reduction in symptoms of anxiety are measured by the arbitrary metrics of psychological rating scales ([Blanton & Jaccard, 2006](#)). Indeed, the gold-standard outcome measure of SAP interventions is number of days absent, which provides a real-world referent, thereby reducing the arbitrary measurement of this primary outcome ([Kazdin, 2006](#)). Nevertheless, there are many other key secondary outcomes, such as improved youth mental health, school connectedness, and academic achievement, as well as improvements in family functioning and parental quality of life. Given that the function of at least the school refusal and truancy forms of SAPs is to reduce stress and gain a behavioral reinforcement ([Heyne et al., 2019, this issue](#)), there are likely biomarkers that can provide predictive value with regard to youths' vulnerability to developing a SAP, as well as serving as sensitive gold-standard measures of treatment response. For example, there is evidence that telomeres (chromosome end caps) progressively shorten in stressed youth but might redevelop in response to effective psychological treatment ([Epel et al., 2004](#)). The Research Domain Criteria (RDoC) Project, initiated by the National Institute of Mental Health in the U.S., presents a myriad of potential biomarkers that can serve as the basis for future research on biological measurement of SAPs (<http://nimh.nih.gov/researchpriorities/rdoc/index.shtml>; e.g., [Lebowitz, Gee, Pine, & Silverman, 2018](#)).

Personalizing Interventions

Special Populations

The problem of school absenteeism among special populations of youth, particularly those with neurodevelopmental disorders, is a relatively neglected area of service delivery and research. The Link program described in the fifth article ([Brouwer-Borghuis et al., 2019, this issue](#)) provides a potentially effective model of an alternative education program that might be effective in developing individualized school programs to enable youth with ASD to reengage with school and attend

regularly. The article refers to research suggesting that youth with ASD are perhaps three times more likely to be absent from school than youth with an intellectual disability alone; the latter group is at least twice as likely as the general school population to be absent. Little if anything is known about the long-term adverse outcomes and cost of absenteeism in youth with neurodevelopmental disorders, who account for at least 3% of the population.

The compelling assumption drawn from the fifth article (Brouwer-Borghuis et al., 2019, *this issue*) and sixth article (McKay-Brown et al., 2019, *this issue*), that the persistent absenteeism of youth with complex neurodevelopmental disorders would require an intensive collaboration between parents, school, and clinicians to develop an individualized learning and school reintegration plan, needs research evidence to justify its application. The notion that these youth with special needs rely upon school reintegration achieved by “not changing the child but changing the task” appears to be self-evident. Once again, however, robust research is required to provide evidence of better school attendance, learning, and social outcomes. Such research also needs to explore the ecological mediators and directional patterns of change following the implementation of individually tailored learning programs. This evidence will be necessary to justify and activate the organizational and government funding required to train the school workforce to implement individualized education plans for youth with SAPs and neurodevelopmental conditions.

Sociocultural Considerations

Placing SAPs in an ecological context is necessary to understand the systemic influences and drivers of the various forms of school absenteeism. The fifth article (Brouwer-Borghuis et al., 2019; *this issue*) summarizes evidence for the association between school-related factors and school refusal specifically, and to some extent SAPs more generally. The school-related factors are: order, safety, and discipline; academic performance and perceptions of the academic program; social relationships with peers, teachers, and other staff; school facilities; and school connectedness. There are some assumptions behind these factors related to the purpose of education in a given society and its role in promoting cultural norms and developing social capital and economic progress. Sociocultural drivers of the school experience clearly have the potential to create an alienating environment and the marginalizing experience of racism for youth and families from a minority culture.

Although not well studied, the challenges for minority culture youth in “mainstream” schools is likely to contribute to all forms of absenteeism, including school

withdrawal and school exclusion. In Australia, for example, the national school attendance rate in 2017 for indigenous students (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders) was 83%, compared with 93% for nonindigenous students, according to the Closing the Gap Report (Australian Government and Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2018). This attendance rate had been stable since 2014 and the rate was lower (around 65%) in remote areas on a given day in the first semester. Rates of nonattendance also rapidly increased through secondary school for indigenous students relative to non-indigenous students. The attendance level (proportion of students attending school 90% or more of the time in first semester of 2017) was only around 49% for indigenous students compared with 77% for all other students, and the level was even lower (21%) for indigenous students in remote areas. A range of factors was suggested to adversely impact on the school attendance of indigenous youth, including poor health, a lack of cultural engagement and awareness by school and teachers, language barriers for indigenous youth where English was not their first language, poverty, and poor housing. Government responses to this issue, which are yet to demonstrate benefit, include programs to improve the quality of teachers’ cultural knowledge and engagement with indigenous communities, development of an indigenous language and cultural curriculum, funding of indigenous teachers’ aides and school attendance officers, and provision of nutrition, school incentives, and school transport programs. These are socio-culturally sensitive changes that are yet to appear in articles such as those in the current series.

Conclusion

In our reflections on the articles in this special series we have tried to present both sides of the “change” coin when characterizing the field of SAPs, with respect to Bob Dylan’s “the times they are a-changing” and Jean-Baptiste Alphonse Karr’s “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” Which side of the coin is most evident to us? We believe the answer is aptly put by another one of our favorites, Joni Mitchell, in her beautiful “Both Sides Now” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pbn6a0AFfnM>). On one side, things have stayed the same. For example, there are ongoing efforts to classify SAPs and to treat school refusal with various CBT approaches, perhaps with adjunctive pharmacotherapy. However, a more nuanced analysis is suggestive of the other side, the changing times. That is, the articles in the special series flag the possibility of transformational change in theory and knowledge development, research direction, and an emphasis on ecological approaches to intervention. Such transformational change can yield tremendous population-wide benefits that address the complexity of SAPs at bio-psycho-socio-cultural levels.

Importantly, what the articles imply and what we wish to underscore here is the importance of pragmatism when developing theory and knowledge, and conducting research in a given field (e.g., Silverman & Kurtines, 1997). That is, the authors of the articles in this special series kept their eyes on the practical significance of their knowledge development efforts. The articles have pragmatism as a core feature, and because of this, we believe the many youth and families who suffer as a result of SAPs will benefit enormously as the field of SAPs continues to progress—that is, change—in innovative and impactful ways. We believe the time is now right to produce robust empirical evidence for the effectiveness of multilevel interventions that include tests of the interventions' reach, adoption, and maintenance using creative methods and tools developed through implementation science and other disciplines (Glasgow, Klesges, Dzewaltowski, Estabrooks, & Vogt, 2006; Glasgow, Vogt, & Boles, 1999).

In closing, we hope readers will be excited and motivated to pursue the practical and research challenges highlighted in this issue. We especially hope that readers will come away with an appreciation for *both sides* of change: change that appears to be the same because it is so incremental, and yet, because of the nuances and the continued “calling out” of how things are sort-of-the-same, it is incremental change that will stimulate transformational change. We end our reflections with some French, in the same way that we started: “*le meilleur est encore à venir*,” or as Frank Sinatra sang in another song we love, “the best is yet to come” (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NqmtCrgpeik>)!

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