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Editorial

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ABSTRACT

The present issue of the *Journal of Clinical and Developmental Psychology* brings together contributions that explore psychological functioning across different developmental stages and life contexts, with particular attention to the interplay between individual vulnerability and social, relational, cultural, and organizational conditions. The studies included in this issue address diverse but interconnected topics, including beauty standards and feminine identity, adolescents' emotional and cognitive responses to gender-based violence, parenting in increasingly digitalized educational contexts, the clinical profile of ADHD in adult women, and workplace violence among healthcare professionals.

Taken together, these contributions highlight the importance of moving beyond exclusively individual explanations of psychological distress and well-being. Across the different areas examined, psychological functioning emerges as shaped by multiple levels of influence, including gender norms, family and peer relationships, educational practices, developmental transitions, and organizational environments. The issue therefore emphasizes the value of context-sensitive approaches to research and intervention, as well as the need to consider both individual resources and the broader conditions that may generate, maintain, prevent, or reduce psychological vulnerability.

Keywords: psychological well-being; social context; gender; adolescence; parenting; ADHD; workplace violence; prevention

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The present issue of the *Journal of Clinical and Developmental Psychology* brings together contributions that, although addressing different populations and phenomena, converge on a common question: how psychological functioning takes shape within the contexts in which individuals grow, construct their identities, develop relationships, and participate in social and professional life. Across the studies collected in this issue, vulnerability and well-being emerge not as exclusively individual conditions, but as processes that develop through interactions with cultural norms, interpersonal relationships, educational environments, developmental transitions, and organizational conditions.

A first thematic axis concerns the relationship between social norms, gender, and the construction of personal and relational meanings. The contribution by **Maïdadi** examines skin depigmentation, locally referred to as “Djanssang,” among women in the Far North Region of Cameroon. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study explores the relationships among beauty standards, body image, and feminine identity, showing how depigmentation is embedded within broader systems of social evaluation and recognition. The findings point to the role of internalized colourism, peer influence, patriarchal norms, digital media, and forms of self-evaluation contingent on skin tone. From this perspective, body-related practices cannot be understood exclusively as individual aesthetic choices, but need to be situated within cultural contexts in which physical appearance may have implications for self-esteem, social recognition, and identity construction. The contribution therefore highlights the need for culturally sensitive psychological approaches capable of considering the interaction between individual experience and socially constructed beauty standards, consistently with perspectives emphasizing the role of objectification and the social gaze in women’s experience of their bodies (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997).

The social construction of meanings also emerges, from a different developmental perspective, in the contribution by **Cavallini et al.**, which examines adolescents’ emotional and cognitive reactions to a femicide involving two young people from their own community. The study documents a complex range of responses, including disbelief, anger, sadness, fear, disgust, and empathy, together with reflections on responsibility, jealousy, possessiveness, relational risks, and possibilities for prevention. Particularly noteworthy is the coexistence of critical awareness of the phenomenon with, in some cases, narratives characterized by the normalization of violence, attempts at justification, or the attribution of responsibility to the victim. Adolescents therefore emerge not as passive observers of gender-based violence, but as active interpreters of such events through the social discourses, relational experiences, and cultural meanings available to them. At the same time, the participants’ age and community proximity to

the event appear to influence perceptions of personal vulnerability and attention to potential warning signs within intimate relationships. These findings underscore the particular relevance of adolescence as a developmental period during which models of intimacy, affective relationships, and interpretations of gender relations are progressively constructed (Erikson, 1968), highlighting the importance of educational and community-based interventions in the prevention of gender-based violence.

If social contexts can contribute to the construction of meanings and conditions of risk, they can also represent important settings for prevention and psychological support. This dimension is addressed by **Preiti et al.**, who present the development and structure of S.O.S. Homework, a parent-training program for parents of lower-secondary school students in the context of increasingly digitalized school–family relationships. The widespread use of electronic gradebooks has facilitated parents’ access to information concerning grades, homework, and absences, but may at the same time encourage excessive monitoring, thereby reducing adolescents’ opportunities to progressively take responsibility for their own school-related activities. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory, S.O.S. Homework aims to promote parenting practices that support the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, while encouraging a more thoughtful use of digital school tools (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Through psychoeducation, guided reflection, role-playing, practical activities, and at-home exercises, the program seeks to address emotional validation, motivation, autonomy-supportive communication, planning, homework-related stress, and the use of electronic gradebooks.

A further dimension emerging from the contributions concerns the need to recognize psychological vulnerability across the life course, while paying attention to the role of gender and specific developmental transitions. The systematic review by **Tirelli et al.** focuses on ADHD in adult women, a population historically characterized by underdiagnosis and delayed clinical recognition. The review highlights a complex profile marked by a substantial burden of psychiatric comorbidity. The findings also draw attention to the interaction between ADHD-related vulnerabilities and specific stages of the female reproductive life cycle, with increased psychological difficulties reported during the premenstrual phase, the postpartum period, and perimenopause. The contribution therefore challenges representations of ADHD predominantly based on externalizing symptom manifestations traditionally associated with male populations. It highlights the need to consider the interaction among neurodevelopmental vulnerabilities, emotional regulation, cumulative psychosocial demands, gender-role expectations, and life-course transitions. From a clinical perspective, this points to the importance of diagnostic approaches that are more sensitive to gender-specific presentations and of greater attention to

internalizing manifestations that may contribute to delayed recognition of ADHD in women.

The relevance of context also emerges beyond family and educational settings, extending to the organization of professional life. **La Barbiera et al.** examine workplace violence among healthcare professionals through a scoping review of evidence concerning its associations with occupational stress, burnout, and psychological well-being. Across the included studies, verbal and psychological aggression emerge among the most frequently reported forms of violence, while exposure to aggressive incidents is consistently associated with emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, occupational stress, anxiety, depression, poorer mental health, and lower job satisfaction. These findings indicate that workplace violence cannot be understood exclusively in terms of individual coping abilities or resilience. Organizational conditions such as social support, perceived safety, and workplace climate may contribute to shaping the psychological impact of exposure to violence. In line with *Conservation of Resources Theory* (Hobfoll, 1989), repeated exposure to threatening and highly demanding situations may lead to a progressive depletion of emotional and psychological resources, increasing vulnerability to stress and burnout. At the same time, the evidence reviewed by the authors points to organizational responsibility in prevention, emphasizing the importance of systems for managing and reporting violence, psychological support, staff training, and the development of safer working environments.

Although they address clearly different phenomena, the contributions collected in this issue share a common move beyond interpretations of psychological distress that isolate individuals from the environments in which their experiences acquire meaning. Body-image-related practices, reactions to gender-based violence, parental involvement in school life, manifestations of a neurodevelopmental condition, and occupational distress represent distinct phenomena, yet they all illustrate how individual functioning is influenced by a broader network of expectations, relationships, opportunities, constraints, and resources. Context can represent a source of pressure and vulnerability, but it can also provide opportunities for protection and change.

Taken together, the contributions presented in this issue offer a contextualized reading of clinical and developmental processes, in which vulnerability is neither reduced to a personal deficit nor separated from individual experience. This perspective has important applied implications: supporting well-being requires not only interventions directed at individuals, but also attention to families, schools, communities, healthcare services, social norms, and organizational practices. Understanding the processes through which psychological vulnerabilities and difficulties emerge means not only identifying the individual resources that

may facilitate adaptation, but also examining the relational, social, cultural, and organizational conditions that contribute to generating, maintaining, or amplifying distress. An excessive focus on individuals' capacity to adapt, self-regulate, or manage stress may, in some circumstances, shift the responsibility for coping with problematic conditions entirely onto the individual, even when those conditions also have contextual and structural origins.

As the contributions in this issue demonstrate from different perspectives, cultural norms, gender dynamics, family practices, educational systems, and organizational conditions can function both as sources of risk and as resources for well-being. Promoting psychological health therefore also means recognizing and making visible the environmental and institutional conditions that generate vulnerability, while supporting the development of more equitable, safe, and supportive contexts. From this perspective, psychological well-being is also a relational and social phenomenon, calling on psychology not only to care for individuals, but also to contribute to understanding the conditions that produce vulnerability and to the development of contexts capable of supporting health and well-being.

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