

Background

- Socioeconomic Status (SES) is an important variable in health and psychosocial research
- In general, SES has been shown to be a predictor of premature mortality (Adler et al., 1993) and is related to mental health problems (Dohrenwend et al., 1992)
- Families of children with Developmental Disabilities (DD) report lower SES than families of typically developing children (Emerson, 2003)
- There are a number of ways of operationalizing SES:
 - Traditional Four-Factor Hollingshead scale (Hollingshead, 1975), based on research in 1960's, calculated SES using: Marital Status, Gender, Education, and Occupation
 - Outdated, many current occupations not included
 - The Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status (Barratt, 2006) based on Hollingshead's scale (1975), uses education and occupation
 - Measure more up-to-date than Hollingshead (1975), but unexamined
- There is little consensus on the best way to measure SES

Purpose and Research Questions

- Examine relationship among 4 measures of SES:
 - 1) The Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status (Barratt, 2006)
 - 2) Median income of residential area (Statistics Canada, 2006)
 - 3) Highest completed level of education
 - 4) Economic Hardship (Emerson et al., 2008)
- Is the relationship different for Immigrant versus Canadian born families?
- Is the relationship different for people who reside in remote/rural, suburban or urban communities in Canada?

Method

- Great Outcomes for Kids Impacted by Severe Developmental Disabilities (GO4KIDDS) is a Canadian team project exploring the health, well-being, and social inclusion of school aged children with Severe DD and that of their parents.
- Poster uses data from the Extended survey; online survey with measures of behaviour, quality of life, physical health, social participation and demographic information
- Participants**
- N=154
 - age: 3-19 years (M=10.8, SD=3.6), 110 boys (72%), 43 girls (28%)
 - 86 diagnosed with Autism (56%)
- Data from Extended survey used to obtain 4 measures of SES:
 - Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status Score (Barratt, 2006)
 - Families' postal code for Median Income
 - Highest completed level of education
 - Material Deprivation questions (Emerson, et al., 2008) to obtain Economic Hardship score

Measures

The Barratt Simplified Measure of Social Status (Barratt, 2006)

- Updated measure of SES based on Hollingshead's (1975) research
- Calculates scores based on education and occupation of parents (calculated for one or two parent households)
- Scores range from 8 to 66
- Excellent reliability: 33 cases (21%) chosen at random recoded independently by first author, $r = .93$

Median household income of residential area (Statistics Canada, 2006)

- Uses Forward Sortation Area of postal code (first 3 digits of Canadian postal code)
- Median income for the people residing in a geographic area can be obtained from census data

Highest completed level of education

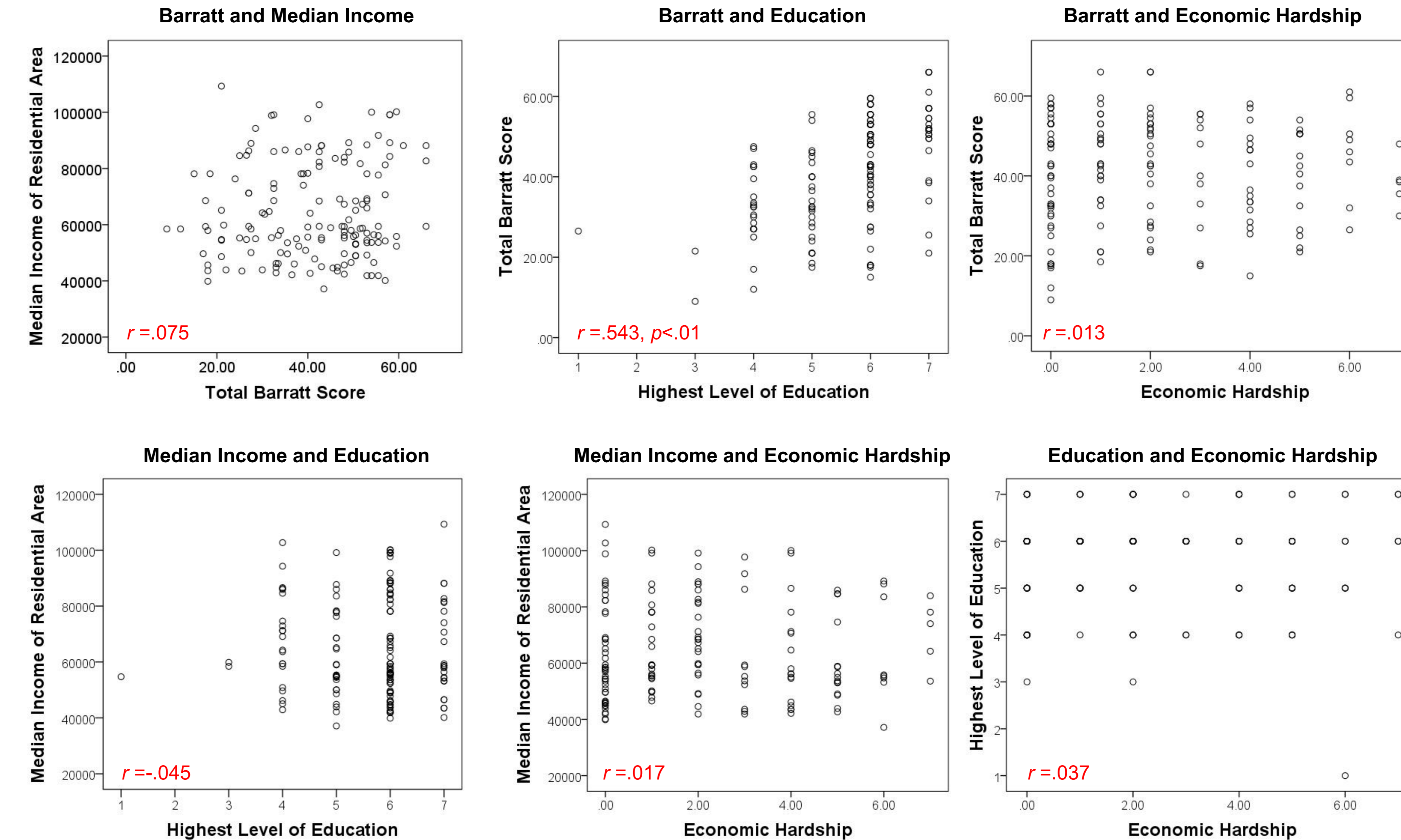
- Categories taken from the Barratt (2006) 1) Less than 7th grade, 2) Junior High/Middle School, 3) Partial High School, 4) High School Graduate, 5) Partial College/University, 6) College/University Graduate, 7) Graduate Degree

Economic Hardship (Emerson, Graham, McCulloch, Blacher, Hatton, & Llewellyn, 2008)

- 7 items about material deprivation
- Asks about going without: fresh fruit or vegetables, holiday away from home once a year (not staying with relatives), hobby or leisure activity, shoes or clothing, small amount of money to spend on yourself, new furniture, car
- Number of items gone without totaled to create Economic Hardship score out of 7 (range 0 to 7)

Results

Spearman Correlations of the 4 measures of SES



Results (cont'd)

Spearman Correlations for Immigrant families

N = 38	Median Income	Barratt Score	Economic Hardship	Education	
Median income					** $p < .01$
Barratt Score	-.171				
Economic Hardship	.082	-.104			
Education	-.110	.736**	-.099		

Spearman Correlations for Canadian born families

N = 116	Median Income	Barratt Score	Economic Hardship	Education	
Median income					** $p < .01$
Barratt Score	.153				
Economic Hardship	.008	.058			
Education	-.008	.477**	.083		

Spearman Correlations for Remote/Rural families

N = 43	Median Income	Barratt Score	Economic Hardship	Education	
Median income					* $p < .05$
Barratt Score	-.201				** $p < .01$
Economic Hardship	-.191	-.041			
Education	-.308*	.422**	-.139		

Spearman Correlations for Suburban families

N = 40	Median Income	Barratt Score	Economic Hardship	Education	
Median income					** $p < .01$
Barratt Score	.006				
Economic Hardship	.285	.009			
Education	-.085	.703**	.153		

Spearman Correlations for Urban families

N = 70	Median Income	Barratt Score	Economic Hardship	Education	
Median income					** $p < .01$
Barratt Score	.168				
Economic Hardship	.055	.060			
Education	-.007	.466**	.115		

Discussion

- 4 measures generally uncorrelated
- Barratt and Education only correlated measures of SES (not independent)
- Relationship between 4 measures of SES not different for Canadian born and Immigrant families
 - Slightly stronger relationship for Immigrant families between Barratt and Education
- Negative correlation between Median Income and Education level for families residing in remote/rural areas of Canada
- Conclusions**
- These 4 indicators of SES seem to be measuring different things
- Unclear which method is most valid
- SES needs to be defined more clearly in order to determine how to measure it

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