



# IACAPAP 2018

23<sup>rd</sup> WORLD CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION  
FOR CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY AND ALLIED PROFESSIONS



## Risk and resilience in children born to parents with severe mental illness – what do we know and what can we do?

Anne A. E. Thorup<sup>1,2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Research Unit at Child and Adolescent Mental Health Center, Capital Region of Denmark

<sup>2</sup>University of Copenhagen, Faculty of Health and Medical Science, Institute of Clinical Medicine, Copenhagen, Denmark

**Background:** For decades familial high-risk studies have informed us about genetic and environmental risk factors for schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. Results from familial high-risk studies can help inform us about developmental psychopathology, early markers of mental illness and possible protective factors and resilience.

**Method:** The Danish High Risk and Resilience Study – VIA 7 is a prospective cohort study of 522 7-year old children, 202 of them born to at least one parent diagnosed with schizophrenia in the Danish registries, 120 of them born to a least one parent diagnosed with bipolar disorder and 200 of them born to parents without any of these diagnoses. A comprehensive battery has been used combining assessments from several domains for both parents and children.

**Results:** Results show that children born to parents with schizophrenia and to some extent also bipolar disorder show early signs of vulnerability that may influence their daily functioning already at age 7 compared to controls. Results concerning psychopathology, neuro-cognition, motor functioning and language development will be presented together with data on attachment and environmental factors, including the home environment.

**Discussion:** Results from the first assessment in VIA 7 indicate that many children and families have unmet needs and problems. This unique cohort is currently being followed-up at age 11 and simultaneously we have evolved an early, integrated, specialized and family based intervention, called VIA Family, aiming to prevent or ameliorate the development mental health problems in individuals born to parents with severe mental illnesses. Perspectives and first experiences will be discussed.