

The Juvenile Psychopath:

Is there such a thing as an adolescent superpredator?

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Faces of Psychopathy



David Berkowitz



Ted Bundy

Psychopaths...

...Are charismatic

...Lack a conscience

...Manipulate others

...Engage in risky & impulsive behaviors

...Lack concern about consequences to others

...Form only shallow & transient relationships

Measuring Psychopathy in Adults

- Psychopathy provides more specificity than Antisocial Personality Disorder.
- As a personality disorder, psychopathy is considered highly stable.
- The “gold standard” measure of psychopathy is the Psychopathy Checklist: Revised (PCL:R), which has been found to predict future violent behavior among adult male offenders.
 - ($r = \text{approx. } .30$ for violent recidivism)

Developmental Concerns

- Adolescence is a time of dramatic psychosocial change.
- Personality disorders should not be diagnosed during this time period (since personality has not yet stabilized).
- PCL:YV, as a downward extension of the PCL:R, has not been validated among adolescents.

Legal Decisions Based on Juvenile Psychopathy

- Six U.S. and Canadian transfer cases
 - US v. Doe (2000): Upward transfer
 - PCL:R (27) offered “as the single best predictor of a person’s future criminal recidivism, violent recidivism, and failure to respond to treatment”
 - These juvenile acts “reflected a psychopathic personality and not mere immaturity”

Legal Decisions Based on Juvenile Psychopathy

- Issue of treatment amenability
 - “One who has been found not amenable for treatment as a sexual psychopath can hardly expect to convince us that he should have been ‘treated’ in a juvenile institution”
 - State v. Pentland (1986)
 - Psychopathic → cannot be treated
 - People v. Haynes (1993), State v. Pentland, (1986); see also Matter of DTH (1997), Morgan v. State (1977), Matter of Fox (1981)

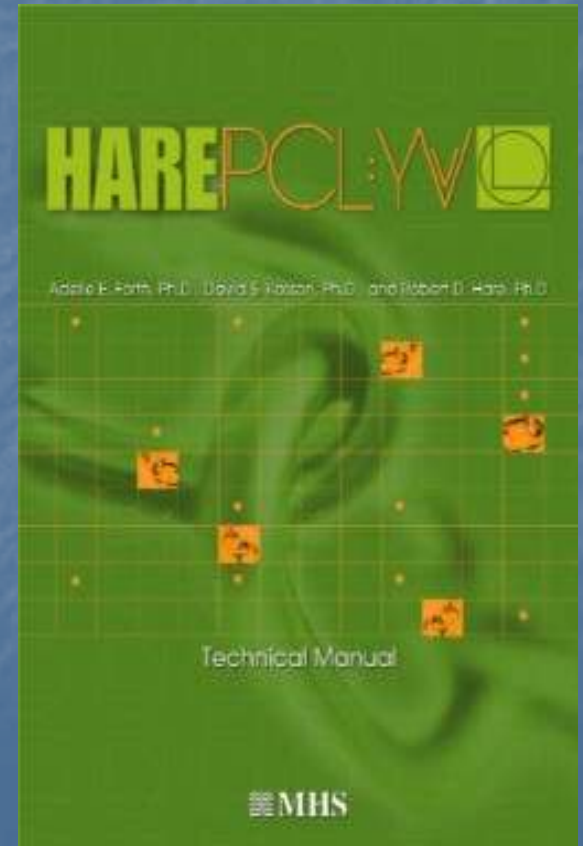
Adolescent Psychopath?



- Cody Posey
 - At 14 years of age, committed a triple homicide (killed his father, stepmother, and stepsister)
- Received a score of 19 on the PCL:YV
 - Deemed a psychopath and untreatable by the adolescent psychiatrist
- Judge sentenced Cody as a juvenile
 - "The court is not convinced that the respondent has antisocial personality traits to the extent that would make him not amendable to treatment or rehabilitation."

The “Downward Extension” of Psychopathy to Adolescence

- The PCL:YV is a slight modification of the PCL:R.
- Contains 20 criteria
 - Scores above cut-off of 30 are considered “psychopathic”
- Composed of two related, but distinct, factors:
 - Factor 1 – Interpersonal / Affective
 - Factor 2 – Behavioral



Items from the PCL-YV

- Impression Management
- Grandiose sense of self-worth
- Pathological lying
- Conning/manipulative
- Lack of remorse or guilt
- Shallow affect
- Callous/Lack of empathy
- Failure to accept responsibility for actions
- Impersonal sexual behavior
- Stimulation Seeking
- Parasitic lifestyle
- Poor anger control
- Early behavior problems
- Lacks goals
- Impulsivity
- Irresponsibility
- Juvenile delinquency
- Serious violation of conditional release
- Criminal versatility
- Unstable interpersonal relationships

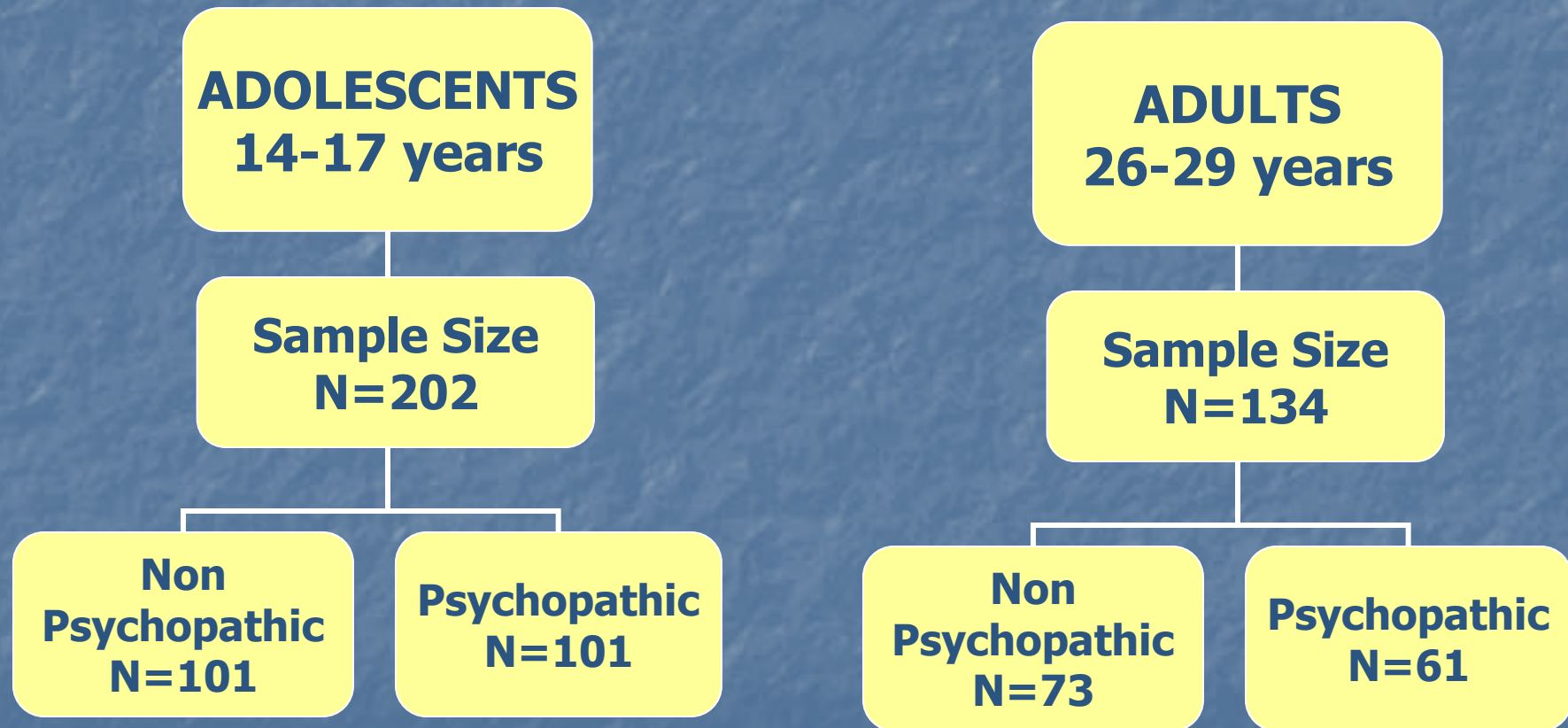
Current Factor Structure

- *Factor 1 - Arrogant and Deceitful Interpersonal Style*
 - Impression Management
 - Grandiose Sense of Self-Worth
 - Pathological Lying
 - Manipulation for Personal Gain
- *Factor 2 - Deficient Affective Experience*
 - Lack of Remorse
 - Shallow Affect
 - Callous/Lack of Empathy
 - Failure to Accept Responsibility
- *Factor 3 - Impulsive and Irresponsible Behavioral Style*
 - Stimulation Seeking
 - Parasitic Lifestyle
 - Lacks Goals
 - Impulsivity
 - Irresponsibility
- *Factor 4 – Antisocial Behavior*
 - Poor Anger Control
 - Early Problem Behaviors
 - Juvenile Delinquency
 - Serious Violations of Conditional Release
 - Criminal Versatility

Aims of the Present Study

- Is psychopathy stable over time?
- How do changes in psychosocial maturity relate to changes in psychopathy?

Study Design



Sample Characteristics

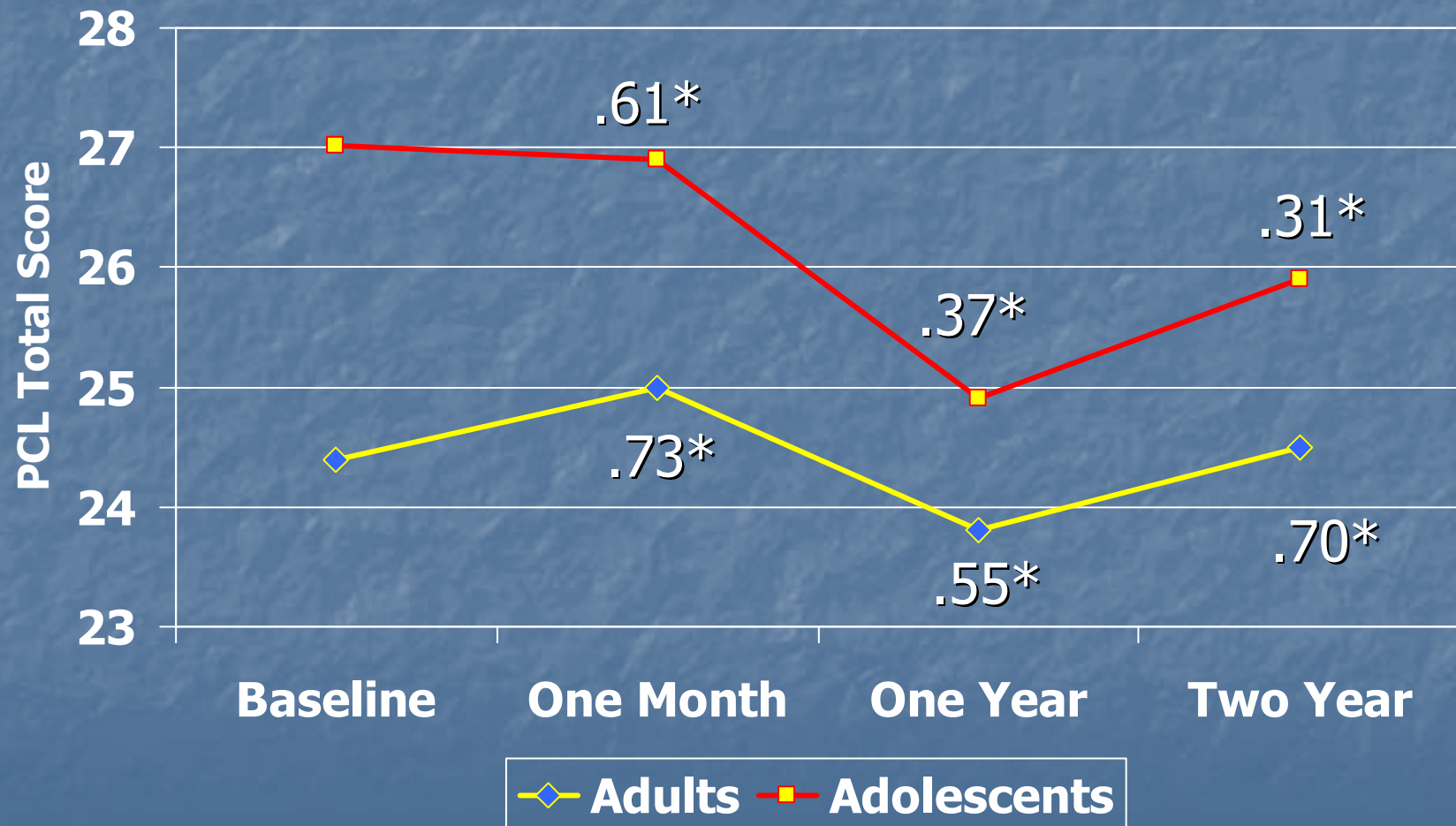
	Adolescent (<u>N = 202</u>)	Adult (<u>N = 134</u>)
Age	15.8 (.90)	27.5 (1.1)
Ethnicity		
Black	43%	54%
Latino	13%	12%
White	35%	29%
Other	9%	5%

Sample Characteristics

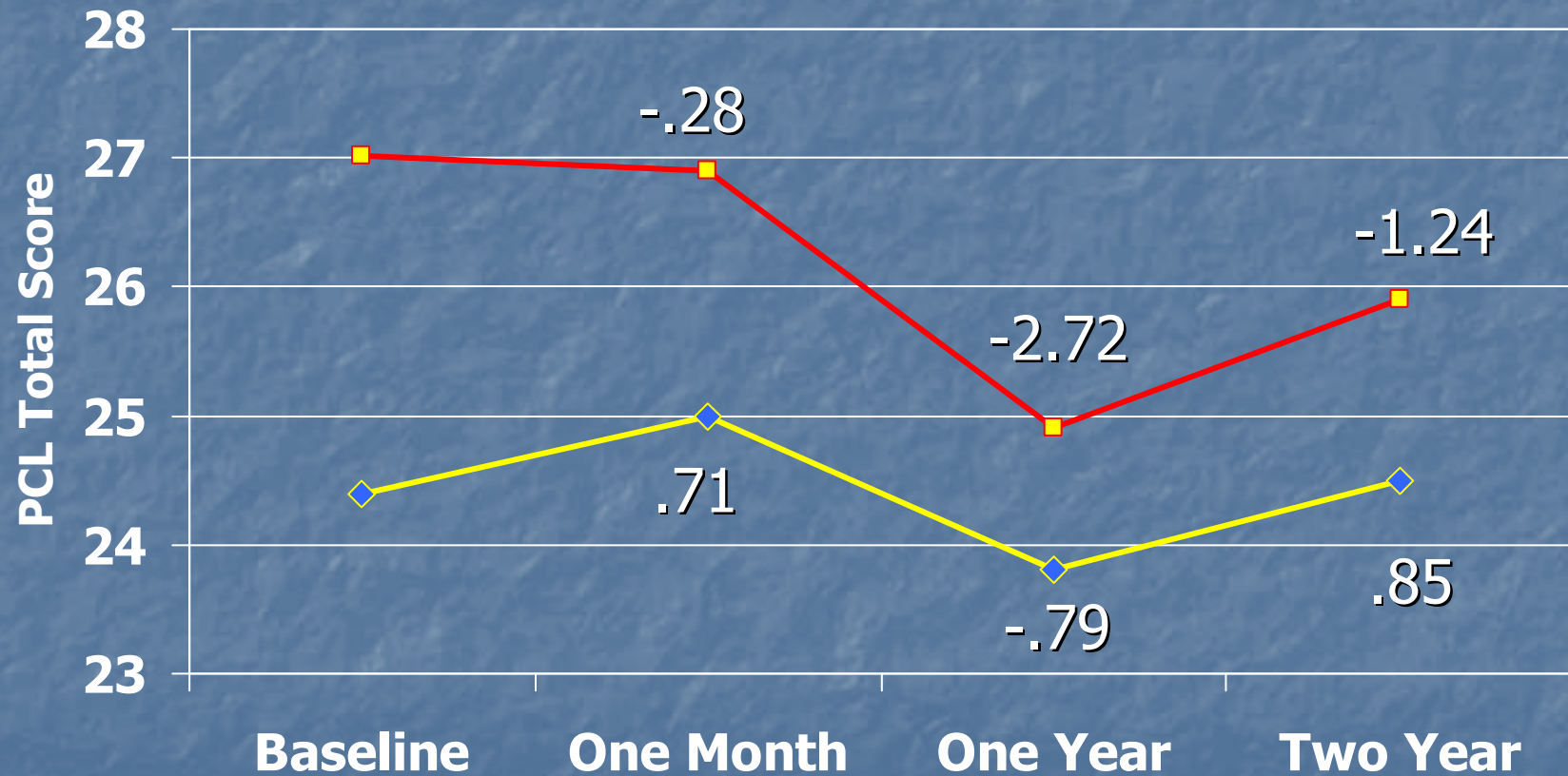
	Adolescent (N = 202)	Adult (N = 134)
Priors(#)	4.9 (6.4)	6.2 (8.4)
Offense(%)		
Person	25	50
Property	6	5
Weapons	3	2
Drug	6	10
Procedural	26	9
Age 1 st Contact	12.3	14.2

Are PCL scores stable over time?

Intraclass Correlation Coefficients



Change Scores



—◆— Adults —■— Adolescents

Significant interaction
 $F(3) = 4.0, p < .01$

*How do changes in
psychosocial maturity relate to
changes in psychopathy?*

Measures of Psychosocial Maturity

■ Responsibility

- Psychosocial Maturity Inventory (Alpha = .84 / .85)
 - Work Orientation, Self-Reliance, Identity
- Resistance to Peer Influence (Alpha = .60 / .64)

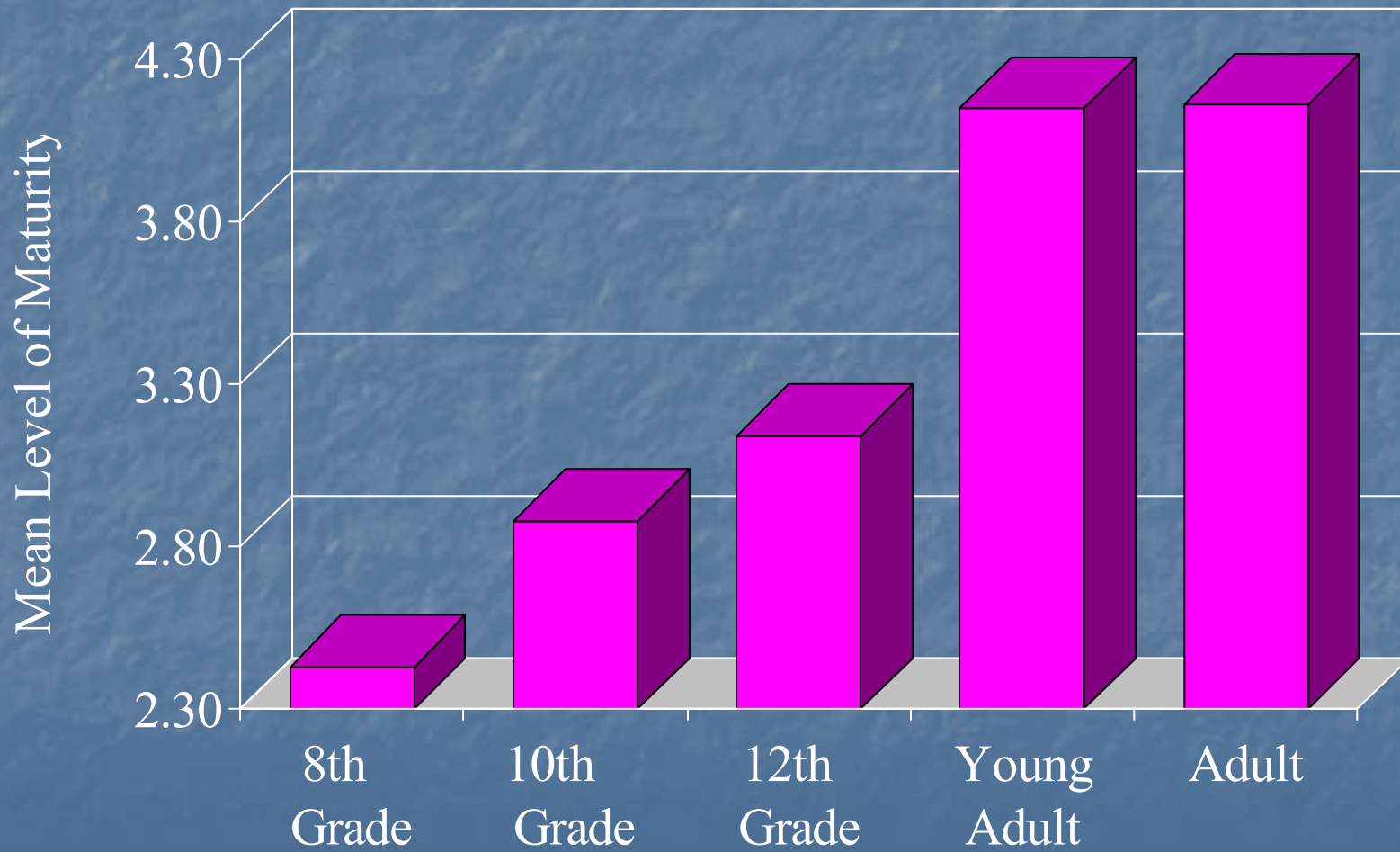
■ Perspective

- Future Outlook Inventory (Alpha = .75 / .76)
- Consideration of Others (Alpha = .78 / .77)

■ Temperance

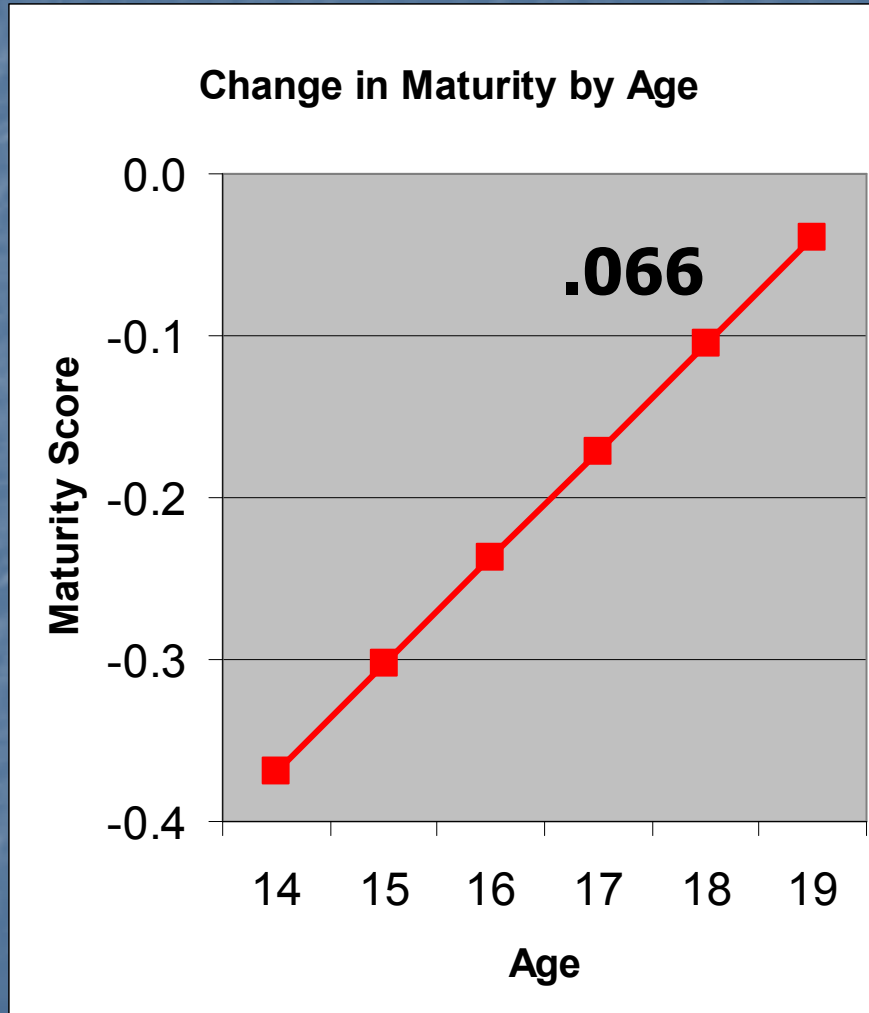
- Self-Control (Alpha = .82 / .81)

Age Differences in Maturity

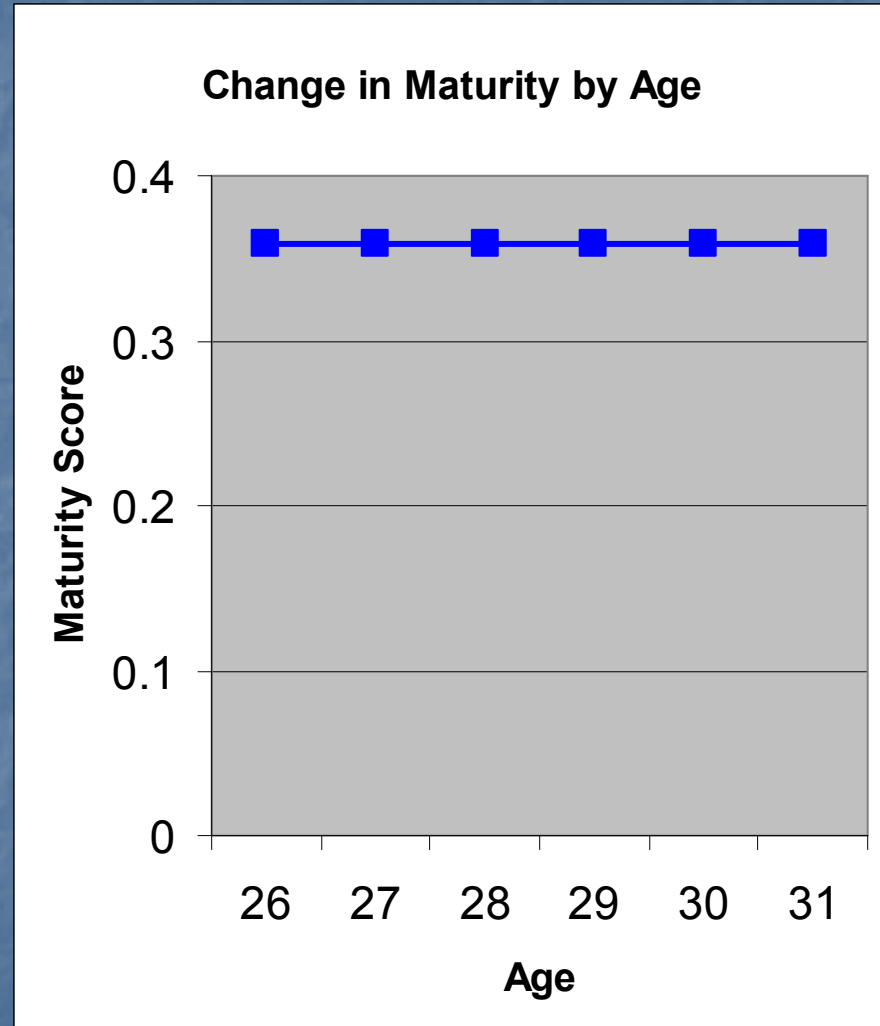


Cauffman & Steinberg, 2000

Changes in Maturity for Adolescents and Adults



Adolescents



Adults

*How do changes in
psychosocial maturity relate to
changes in psychopathy?*

Correlations Between Change in Maturity and Change in PCL Scores

ADOLESCENTS

- Baseline to One Year
 - $-.27^*$

ADULTS

- Baseline to One Year
 - $-.08$

Conclusions

- Relative to adults, adolescents psychopathy scores are not as stable.
- There appears to be some change in psychopathy even among adults.
- Changes in developmental maturity are related to changes in psychopathy for adolescents but not for adults.

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