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## **YOUNG-KIN: The mental wellbeing of children as next of kin: Examining their life conditions and testing a psychosocial intervention**

The YOUNG-KIN project is about the mental wellbeing of children as next of kin (CANOK): children whose parent (or other co-habiting family member) have serious health issues (mental disorder or disability, serious physical illness or injury, are addicted to alcohol or other agents) or have died unexpectedly.

The project unveils the life conditions of young CANOK (12-15 years old) and the impact on their mental wellbeing. It also co-develops and tests a psychosocial intervention for primary and secondary prevention of mental health issues usually linked with being CANOK.

### ***The project aims to answer the following research questions:***

- What is the prevalence and distribution of the role of CANOK in Sweden among different demographic, socio-economic, psychosocial, and health conditions?
- What are CANOK's life conditions and risk factors for their mental wellbeing?
- Do these life conditions and risk factors differ for female compared to male CANOK?
- What are the needs and preferences of mental health support among CANOK?
- Is the project psychosocial intervention programme for CANOK effective and sustainable?

### ***Data and method***

The project has a mixed-methods design which includes four sub-studies:

1. the development of a theoretical and conceptual model through a scoping review
2. a survey questionnaire among children/adolescents aged 12-15 years (empirical observational study)
3. a randomized controlled trial (RCT) testing a psychosocial intervention for CANOK (empirical intervention study)
4. the organisation of periodical Blended Learning Networks (BLNs) with end users and stakeholders (participatory research method).

### ***The project will be organised in five scientific work packages (WPs):***

- WP1: Theoretical and conceptual model of the CANOK role (sub-study 1: scoping review)
- WP2: Survey design, data collection and analysis (sub-study 2: survey questionnaire)
- WP3: Intervention design, implementation and evaluation (sub-study 3: RCT)
- WP4: User and stakeholder engagement through a BLN and Advisory and Ethics Board (AEB) (sub-study 4: BLN)
- WP5: Raising awareness and reaching societal impact

### ***Relevance***

CANOK are an under-investigated group of children/adolescents, who often experience challenging life situations (due to family members' frail conditions), mental health issues, and social inequalities. The project will shed light on prevalence, mental health issues and needs, and effective support for CANOK in Sweden.

### ***Lead researcher***

- Elizabeth Hanson, Principal Investigator, Professor and scientific leader, Department of Health and Caring Sciences, Linnaeus University and Swedish Family Care Competence Centre (Nationellt kompetenscentrum anhöriga - Nka)

### ***Project team***

- Samantha Sinclair, Senior Lecturer, Department of Psychology, Linnaeus University
- Francesco Barbabella, researcher, Department of Health and Caring Sciences Linnaeus University and Swedish Family Care Competence Centre
- Lennart Magnusson, Associate Professor, Department of Health and Caring Sciences, Linnaeus University and Director, Swedish Family Care Competence Centre
- Johanna Miranda Sköld, facilitator/practitioner Swedish Family Care Competence
- Emilia Öhberg, Doctoral student

### ***Collaborations with organisations, researchers and practitioners***

The YOUNG-KIN project team will carry out research activities in collaboration with other professionals and representatives from civil society and faith communities. The following stakeholders are those who have already confirmed their interest to participate in and support the project:

- Municipalities of Borås, Jönköping, Mullsjö, Oskarshamn, Uddevalla and Uppsala
- Swedish Red Cross Trauma Centres in Skövde and Skellefteå
- Swedish Church (Borås)
- Swedish Family Care Competence Centre
- National Board of Health and Welfare (Socialstyrelsen, NBHW)
- The Region of Kalmar County (Region Kalmar län)
- Advisory and Ethics Board (AEB): a Board with eight international experts (from various European countries)
- Eurocarers: European federation of non-profit and research organisations working on/for informal carers.

### ***Financing***

- The Kamprad Family Foundation for Entrepreneurship, Research & Charity Research and education - Mental illness and/or prolonged pain
- Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, Linnaeus University

### ***Time plan***

January 1, 2023- December 31, 2026

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