Understanding neural processes related to pediatric health holds promise for improving pediatric psychology theory and practice in a variety of areas, including health decision-making, health perceptions, and health behavior. Furthermore, pediatric health is influenced by neurodevelopmental processes, including changes in executive and inhibitory function throughout childhood and adolescence. Indeed, development in neural processes greatly influences the variation in health behaviors among children and across the developmental transition to adulthood. Examining associations between neural functions and pediatric health is especially important in light of the National Institutes of Mental Health’s Research Domain Criteria (RDoC), which aims to establish basic processes, including neural processes, which contribute to health or illness. The RDoC framework holds promise in expanding our understanding of pediatric health by establishing fundamental processes that crosscut child health conditions. Health neuroscience research has been highly influential in the adult health psychology literature, leading to greater understanding of the neural underpinnings of physiological and psychological processes that affect health (e.g., how exercise impacts brain health, how mindfulness training alters stress reactivity). Health neuroscience research represents a promising area of investigation for pediatric health promotion.

To facilitate greater understanding of the neural bases of pediatric health and health behavior, additional research exploring associations between neural processes and health outcomes is important. Therefore, the purpose of this special issue is to feature research examining neural processes as predictors, correlates, or consequences of pediatric health and health behavior. The research may examine the brain as a mediator of pediatric health behavior or an outcome of health behavior. We invite manuscripts employing a variety of methods for examining neural processes, including neuropsychology methods, magnetic resonance imagining, electroencephalography, or emerging neuroimaging methods (e.g., diffusion tensor imaging). We welcome research across domains of pediatric health. For example, executive control processes affect numerous health outcomes and investigations of this construct have yielded important results in many areas of pediatric health (e.g., diabetes self-management, dietary behavior). Similarly, interventions designed to enhance executive control have been shown to engender health-promoting behaviors. We invite several manuscript types including but not limited to: (a) intervention efficacy or intervention trials; (b) experimental neuroscience studies; (c) observational studies with prospective designs; (d) topical reviews presenting novel theoretical perspectives, and (d) systematic reviews examining the research literature in this area. We also expect manuscripts to highlight implications for clinical practice, research, and/or policy.

Submissions will be due on October 1, 2017.

Papers should be prepared in compliance with JPP’s Instructions to Authors (https://academic.oup.com/jpepsy) and submitted through the ScholarOne Manuscript Central™ submission portal (http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/jpepsy). Manuscripts will be peer reviewed. Papers that are not appropriate for inclusion in this special issue may be rerouted (with the authors’ knowledge and consent) for consideration for publication in JPP as regular papers. Please indicate in the cover letter accompanying your manuscript that you would like to have the paper considered for the Special Issue on Neural Processes and Pediatric Health.

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