**Adhering to the hierarchy: Multi-level modelling in multi-site outcome evaluations**

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Project K is a New Zealand based positive youth development programme that targets Year 10 students with low self-efficacy. The programme incorporates wilderness adventure activities, a community project and exploration, and one-to-one mentoring over a 14-month period. A primary aim is to increase the participants’ academic and social self-efficacy. The Graeme Dingle Foundation (previously known as the Foundation for Youth Development) licenses communities throughout New Zealand to deliver the programme across multiple programme sites. In 2004, a large-scale randomised controlled trial (RCT) outcome evaluation was designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the programme. Data were collected over several years across 50 programme sites, each operating independently with a randomly assigned group of 12 programme and 12 control participants.

The multi-site RCT design generated a data structure that is most appropriately analysed using multilevel (or hierarchical linear) modelling. The findings pertaining to Project K’s effectiveness increasing participant self-efficacy (see article) will be discussed in relation to the analytic benefits multi-level modelling offers to multi-site outcome evaluation designs. Distinctions will be drawn between the strategies used in multi-level modelling techniques and those used in more widely known fixed-effects models, highlighting the unique theoretical and practical issues the multilevel approach has been designed to address. Attention will be drawn to common oversights associated with the use of fixed effects models in this specific intervention context.

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Topics: Programme Evaluation, Hierarchical Linear Modelling

**Monday June 20th, 2pm-3pm, N505 Lecture Theatre, Epsom Campus**