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# Labor market integration of adolescents with mental disorders

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**Abstract** Earlier research has shown that mental health problems at early stages of life negatively affect the individuals' long-term employment prospects and occupational attainments. Accordingly, the chances of individuals with mental disabilities of becoming economically independent are often constraint and their social integration is hampered. This situation impairs their well-being which in turn is likely to exacerbate their mental health. One of the reasons for the limited occupational achievements of individuals with mental disorders is their lack of educational degrees. They may have dropped out of school, have achieved only low levels of education or have graduated from schools for children with special needs. Their educational attainments thus often do not allow them to take up standard jobs. Our paper addresses the question how mental health interventions in children with mental disabilities are linked to their labor market outcomes. We analyze whether there are educational and vocational programs or psychiatric interventions that mitigate the negative impact of mental disorders on educational and occupational outcomes. Moreover, we examine which consecution of educational and psychotherapeutic measures enhances young adults' chances to be in employment at age 21. We analyze a dataset on 500 young adults in Switzerland who have either received a disability pension or rehabilitation measures be-

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tween 2010 and 2013. We find that the earlier in life interventions—such as rehabilitation measures—are implemented, the higher is the chance that individuals are in an economic activity in early adulthood. Our analysis shows that individuals who entered disability insurance system relatively late and exhibit frequent interruptions in their educational trajectory are likely to be without training or employment at age 21. This finding is in line with the life course paradigm that suggests that individuals who differ with respect to a particular characteristic at a young age – for instance mental health – manifest much stronger differences in this characteristic later in life. Moreover, focusing on rehabilitation measures, we find that a large share of individuals has experienced continuous psychiatric treatment. The implications of our findings are that there is a need for early intervention, particularly in school settings for children with mental disorders. The earlier the intervention takes place, the better there seems to be the outcome for the affected individuals.