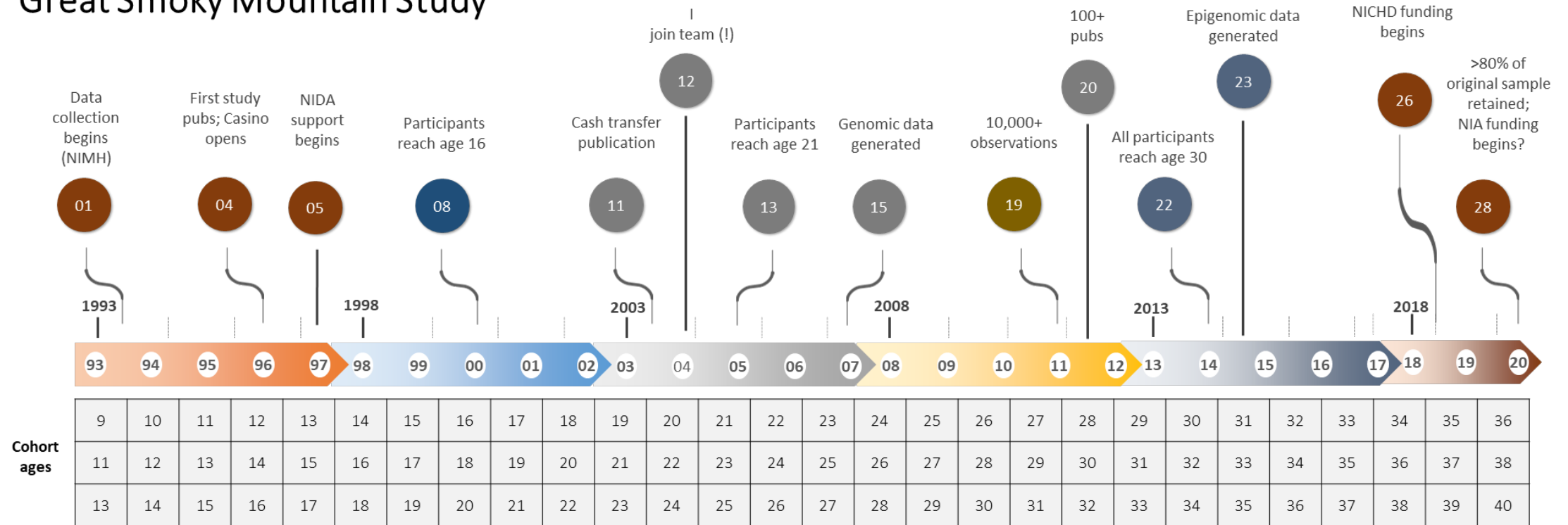


William E. Copeland, PhD
Professor of Psychiatry

Great Smoky Mountain Study



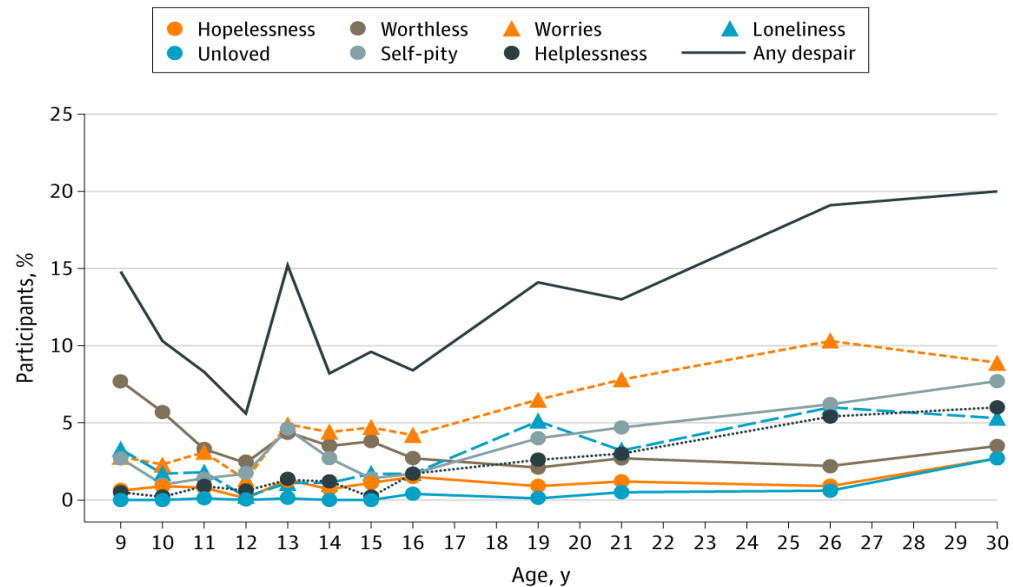
- **The Great Smoky Mountains study is a longitudinal, population-based study of mental health in a rural area of the Southeast.**
- It is now the longest, continuously-funded NIH study of life in a rural context.
- It has been funded by the National Institutes of Mental Health, Drug Abuse, Child Health and Human Development, and, now, Aging.

THE ROBERT LARNER, M.D. COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

89 BEAUMONT AVENUE | BURLINGTON, VT 05405-0068

PHONE 802-656-2156 | WWW.MED.UVM.EDU

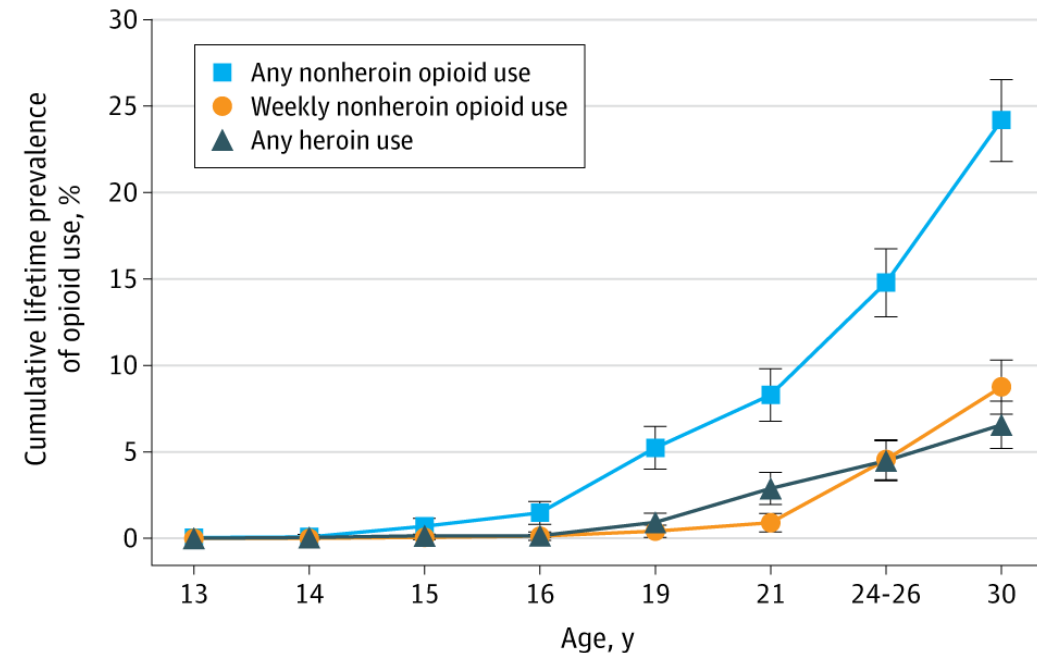
Study 1: Despair and its diseases in Rural America



- Cognitive **despair increases across development**
- Such despair predicts increased suicidal thoughts and behaviors and opioid use/abuse in early adulthood

Copeland, W. E., Gaydos, L., Hill, S. N., Godwin, J., Harris, K. M., Costello, E. J., & Shanahan, L. (2020). Associations of despair with suicidality and substance misuse among young adults. *JAMA Network Open*, 3(6), e208627-e208627.

Study 2: Childhood Precursors of Opioid use



- By age 30, 1 in 4 individuals living at the epicenter of the opioid epidemic had used non-heroin opioid
- The **strongest childhood predictors of opioid use was tobacco use**, chronic depression suggesting impaired reward system functioning

Shanahan, L., Hill, S. N., Bechtiger, L., Steinhoff, A., Godwin, J., Gaydos, L. M., . . . Copeland, W. E. (2021). Prevalence and Childhood Precursors of Opioid Use in the Early Decades of Life. *JAMA pediatrics*, 175(3), 276-285. doi:10.1001/jamapediatrics.2020.5205