Twitter Thread by SCALES

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Today we have @SarahGriff90 discussing her recently published paper 'Early language competence, but not general cognitive ability, predicts children's recognition of emotion from facial and vocal cues'.

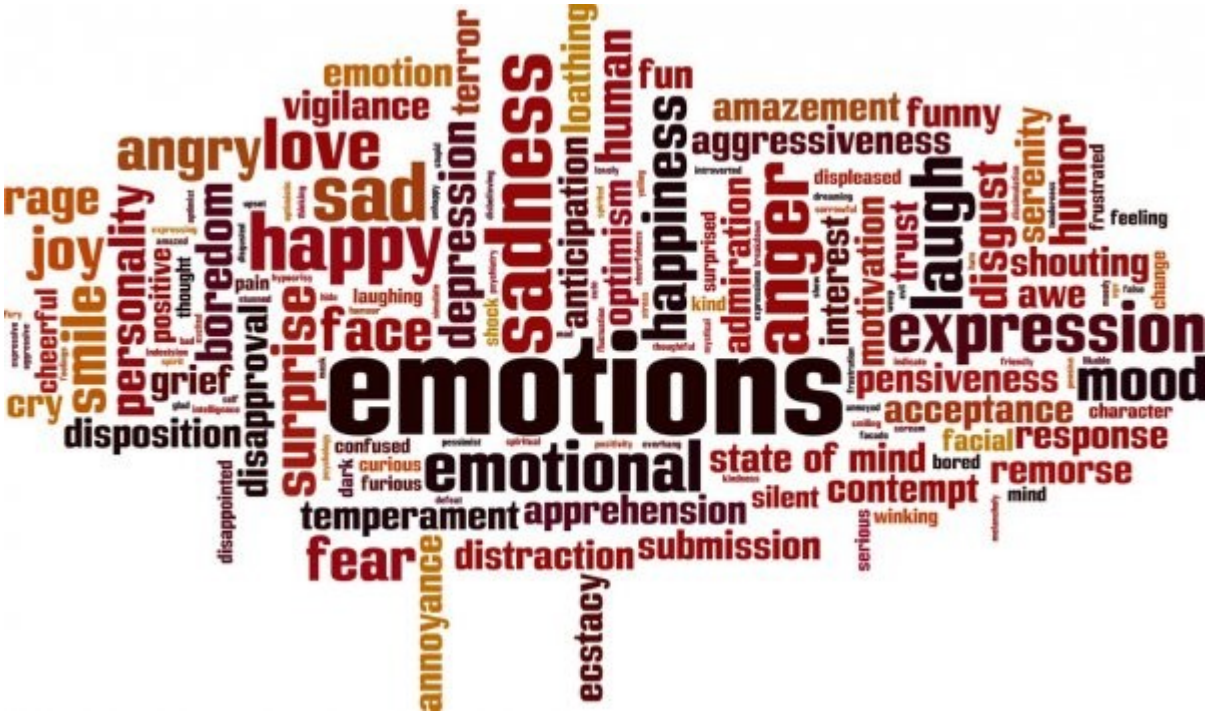
Although most children with Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) do not develop mental health problems, they are at greater risk compared to their typically developing peers.



If we want to intervene to minimise this risk, we need to understand why DLD is associated with poorer mental health.



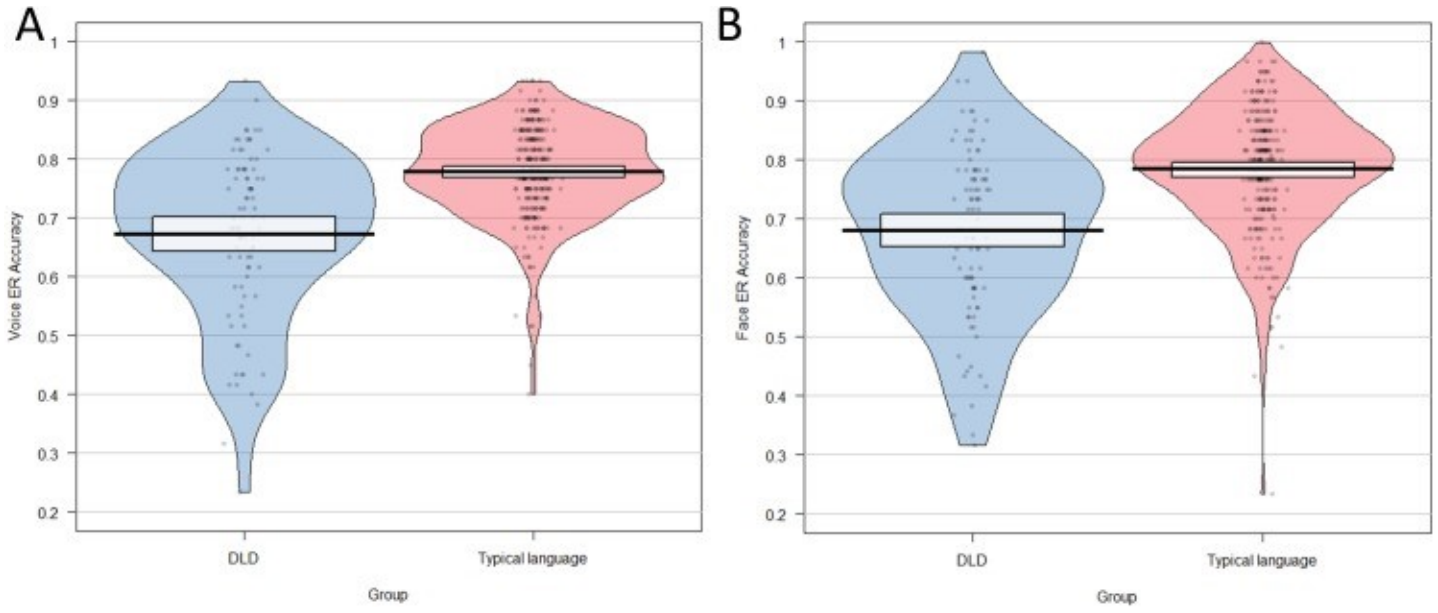
One possibility we are exploring in SCALES is that poor language reduces the ability to recognise and reason about emotions, which in turn increases risk of mental ill health.



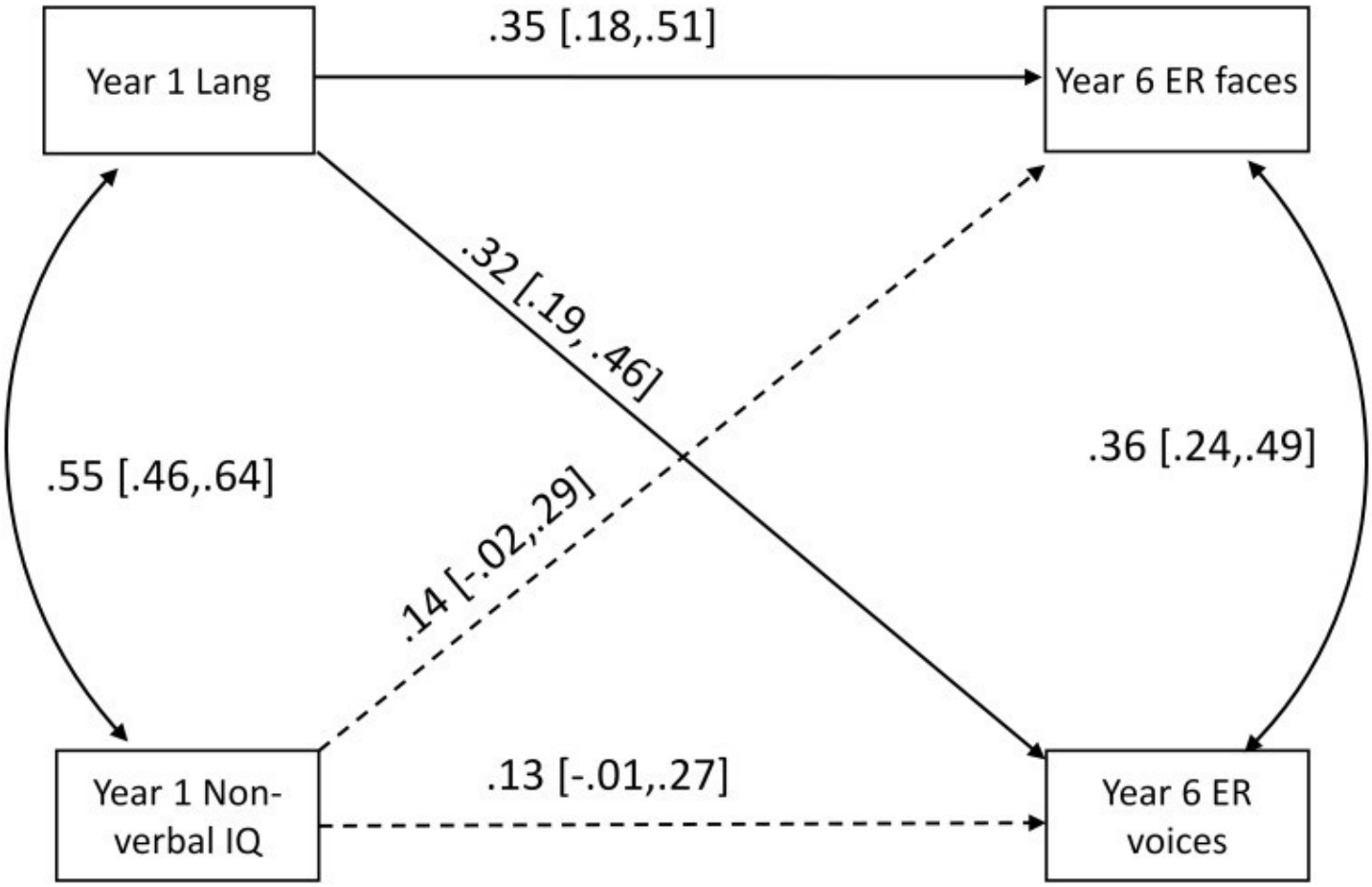
Our first step to testing this theory was to test whether early language competence predicts emotion recognition (ER).



When the SCALES children (N = 369) were in Year 6 they completed 2 tasks measuring ER from facial expression and vocal sounds (e.g. laugh/cry). Children that met the criteria for DLD in Year 1 were less accurate in their ER in Year 6 than their typically developing peers.



We also found that, across the whole sample, language competence in Year 1, but not general cognitive ability, predicted emotion recognition accuracy in Year 6.



This study provides good evidence that ER is a challenge for children with DLD and that this seems to be directly related to their language skills.

We suggest that ER and more specifically, the language around emotion, should be a target for interventions for children with DLD.



Our next step is to look at whether emotion recognition ability in Year 6 mediates any relationship between language competence in Year 1 and mental health outcomes in secondary school.



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