A scoping review of the international evidence of differential attainment loss during school holidays: protocol

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Review question:

Do inequalities in academic achievement and social, emotional, and cognitive development increase over school holidays?

Inclusion criteria

Include if:

- Primary study about the impact of exposure to a planned gap in schooling, i.e. school holidays (‘summer learning loss’ or ‘summer slide’)
  - Quantitative studies including a control group
  - Quantitative studies reporting before and after measures
  - Qualitative studies
- Study population of school pupils aged 4 to 18 years (general population or specific groups, e.g. ethnic groups, socioeconomically disadvantaged groups, pupils with learning difficulties)
- Study examines difference in achievement/learning loss or cognitive, emotional or social development between groups of children (defined by socioeconomic status, disability status, or ethnicity) (quantitative studies only) or perceptions and experiences of achievement gap/learning loss/development over school holidays (qualitative studies only)
- Outcomes
  - Quantitative: Differential change between groups of children (defined by socioeconomic status, disability status, or ethnicity) in:
    - Attainment (education test scores/results)
    - Cognitive test results
    - Social skills test results (e.g. SDQ)
    - Emotional development, emotional or behavioural problems (e.g. CBCL)
  - Qualitative: Perceptions and experiences of (parents and?) children (selected for socioeconomic status, disability status, or ethnicity) of learning loss over school holidays
- English language

Exclude if:

- Studies of summer schools, summer camps, summer learning programmes, or other interventions aimed at improving performance
• Studies of unplanned interruptions of mainstream schooling (disasters, disease outbreaks, conflict)
• Post-secondary education

Screening

Title and abstract stage: 20% sample to be double-screened

Duplicate screening at full-text stage, proportion depending on number of studies to be screened:

- <50: 100% double screening
- 51-100: 30%
- >100: 10%

Data extraction

A 20% sample of the studies will undergo duplicate data extraction for quality assurance.

A template for data extraction will be developed, to include: Citation, year published, country, study design, school setting, holiday characteristics (length, timing), participant characteristics (n, age, SES, sex, ethnicity, learning difficulties, whether ‘looked after’, adverse childhood experiences), outcome measures (objective/self-report, tool, quantitative comparison or qualitative data collection method, time period of data collection) and outcome data. The template will be piloted on a small number of studies by two reviewers independently and refined before being used to record data extracted from all included studies.

Data synthesis

Narrative summary of study findings.