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# PALS NEWSLETTER

A newsletter of the Pittsburgh ADHD Longitudinal Study

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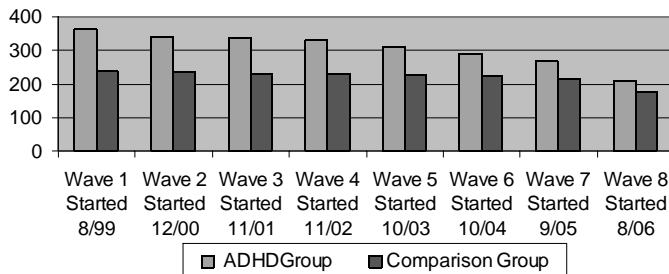
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## STUDY UPDATE

### Ninth Assessment Begins

Beginning August 4, 2007, we began our ninth assessment with study participants. Letters were mailed to many of you at the end of July to schedule this interview. If you have received a letter, and know when you would like to come in for your interview, please call the PALS scheduling line at 412-246-5656. The table below details the number of visits that have been completed at each wave. In total, more than 9,400 visits have been completed since the study began in August, 1999.

Young Adult Visits Completed to Date



## Study Continuation

As many of you know, the current study is funded for a total of nine waves of data collection, or through August, 2008. In July, Drs. Molina and Pelham submitted an application to the National Institute of Health to extend the study. More information will follow in the November, 2007 newsletter and through direct correspondence to participants about what the extension will look like. The application will be reviewed in the fall, and we should know the results of the review by late October. One factor that should help a favorable review of the application is our great retention rate—more than 95% of the original study participants continue to be interviewed annually. This greatly contributes to the strength of the study.

## August 2007

**Former Summer  
Program  
Counselor on the  
Animal Planet!**



Some of you may remember David Gall, a counselor in the 1995 and 1996 Summer Treatment Programs (STPs). After leaving Pittsburgh, he made a shift in careers and

became a veterinarian, and is now part of a television series on the Animal Planet, *E-Vet Interns*. This 30 minute television series follows six doctors fresh out of veterinary school and a seventh doctor participating in a surgical internship, who joined the experienced medical team at Alameda East Animal Hospital in Denver, CO for a year. Following his work in the STPs, David moved to Colorado where he worked as a child therapist. He earned a veterinary medicine degree from Colorado State University in 2002. For more information, check out the Animal Planet website <http://animal.discovery.com> and search for the show *E-Vet Interns*.

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### Important Study Phone Numbers

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# STUDY FINDINGS

## Young Adult Risky Sexual Behavior

Much research has shown that children with ADHD often have academic, behavioral, or social difficulties. We also know (in part from the PALS) that additional problems, such as substance abuse and risky driving, can emerge when these individuals reach adolescence or young adulthood. Surprisingly, until recently no researchers had studied whether individuals with ADHD in childhood are more likely as teens or adults to engage in risky sexual behaviors (like not using condoms). Dr. Kate Flory, a postdoctoral scholar with Dr. Molina who is now at the University of South Carolina, analyzed the PALS data to address this question.

Using information collected with a questionnaire in the PALS, we compared the risky sexual behaviors of young adult males with and without childhood ADHD. The behaviors we studied included age at first intercourse, number of sexual partners, participation in casual sex ("sex with someone you don't know or just met"), intercourse while under the influence of drugs or alcohol, use of condoms and other methods of birth control, diagnosis of a sexually transmitted disease (STD), and partner pregnancies. At the time of these analyses, too few girls in the study were old enough to examine their risk for these behaviors.

Our results indicated that, on average, young men with childhood ADHD had their first sexual experiences at younger ages than the men without childhood ADHD. For example, first intercourse occurred on average at age 17.90 compared to 18.39 years old for men without childhood ADHD. Men with childhood ADHD were more likely to have had casual sex during the past year, with 37% of those with childhood ADHD reporting this behavior versus 19% for men without childhood ADHD. Men with childhood ADHD were also more likely to have casual unprotected sex (15% of men with childhood ADHD reported this behavior vs. only 5% of men without childhood ADHD), intercourse that led to pregnancy (24% versus 5%), and greater than 4 sexual partners in their lifetime (60% versus 28%). Finally, men with childhood ADHD reported less frequent use of reliable birth control methods (like condoms or the pill).

It is important to note that not all children with ADHD will participate in risky sexual behaviors. However, as with drug abuse and risky driving,

our findings suggest increased risk and the need to be vigilant about these behaviors. Risky sexual behaviors like the ones examined in this study increase risk for contracting STDs or having unwanted pregnancies. Obviously, these are consequences that individuals with ADHD would want to avoid and consequences that parents and professionals would like to prevent. As the participants in the PALS age toward 30, we hope to learn more about these outcomes, including their successful management, so that we may guide future research efforts in this area. Until then, we believe that good communication between partners, and between parents and teens about protection during intercourse (or abstinence) and the close monitoring of teen activities by parents are very important for decreasing participation in risky sexual behaviors among adolescents and young adults with ADHD.

*Kate Flory, Ph.D.*

*Assistant Professor of Psychology  
University of South Carolina*

**Don't forget to  
check our  
program website!**



Visit us at

**[www.youthandfamilyresearch.com](http://www.youthandfamilyresearch.com)**

Not only can you find information about the Youth and Family Research Program and our Staff, you can:

- Get directions to our office and information on parking
- Contact a Youth and Family Research Program staff member
- Find information about community resources
- Find out about **new** research projects that are currently accepting participants

**Log on today!**

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# Five Ways Pets Can Improve Your Health

By Jeanie Davis (2007, Good House Keeping)

A pet is certainly a great friend. After a difficult day, pet owners quite literally feel the love. In fact, for nearly 25 years, research has shown that living with pets provides certain health benefits. Pets help lower blood pressure and lessen anxiety. They boost our immunity. They can even help you get dates.



## Allergy Fighters

"The old thinking was that if your family had a pet, the children were more likely to become allergic to the pet. And if you came from an allergy-prone family, pets should be avoided," says researcher James E. Gern, M.D., a pediatrician at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology*. However, a growing number of studies have suggested that kids growing up in a home with "furred animals" — whether it's a pet cat or dog, or on a farm and exposed to large animals — will have less risk of allergies and asthma, he tells WebMD. In his recent study, Gern analyzed the blood of babies immediately after birth and one year later. He was looking for evidence of an allergic reaction, immunity changes, and for reactions to bacteria in the environment. If a dog lived in the home, infants were less likely to show evidence of pet allergies — 19% vs. 33%. They also were less likely to have eczema, a common allergy skin condition that causes red patches and itching. In addition, they had higher levels of some immune system chemicals — a sign of stronger immune system activation. "Dogs are dirty animals, and this suggests that babies who have greater exposure to dirt and allergens have a stronger immune system," Gern says.

## Date Magnets

Dogs are great for making love connections. Forget Internet matchmaking — a dog is a natural conversation starter. This especially helps ease people out of social isolation or shyness, Nadine Kaslow, Ph.D., professor of psychiatry and behavioral sciences at Emory University in Atlanta, tells WebMD. "People ask about breed, they watch the dog's tricks," Kaslow says. "Sometimes the conversation stays at the 'dog level,' sometimes it becomes a real social interchange."

## Dogs for the Aged

"Studies have shown that Alzheimer's patients have fewer anxious outbursts if there is an animal in the home," says Lynette Hart, Ph.D., associate professor at the University of California at Davis School of Veterinary Medicine. "Their caregivers also feel less burdened when there is a pet, particularly if it is a cat, which generally requires less care than a dog," says Hart. Walking a dog or just caring for a pet — for elderly people who are able — can provide exercise and companionship. One insurance company, Midland Life Insurance Company of Columbus, Ohio, asks clients over age 75 if they have a pet as part of their medical screening — which often helps tip the scales in their favor.

## Good for Mind and Soul

Pet owners with AIDS are far less likely to suffer from depression than those without pets. "The benefit is especially pronounced when people are strongly attached to their pets," says researcher Judith Siegel, Ph.D. In one study, stockbrokers with high blood pressure who adopted a cat or dog had lower blood pressure readings in stressful situations than did people without pets. People in stress mode get into a "state of disease," in which harmful chemicals like cortisol and norepinephrine can negatively affect the immune system, says Blair Justice, Ph.D., a psychology professor at the University of Texas School of Public Health and author of *Who Gets Sick: How Beliefs, Moods, and Thoughts Affect Your Health*. Studies show a link between these chemicals and plaque buildup in arteries, the red flag for heart disease, says Justice. Like any enjoyable activity, playing with a dog can elevate levels of serotonin and dopamine — nerve transmitters that are known to have pleasurable and calming properties, he tells WebMD.

## Good for the Heart

Heart attack patients who have pets survive longer than those without, according to several studies. Male pet owners have less sign of heart disease — lower triglyceride and cholesterol levels — than nonowners, researchers say.



# SUDOKU CLASSIC

*Sudoku* is the Japanese word combining "number" and "single". Its origin stems from an 18th century game by a Swiss mathematician. His game was named "Latin Squares". This is truly an international game.

7	6	3			8	1	2	4
4			7		3			
	1				4	9		
	4	2						8
		5	3		9	2		
8						3	7	
		1	4				6	
			8		1			2
6	8	7	2			4	1	3

by [www.sudoku.com](http://www.sudoku.com)



## GAMEPLAY

The object of the game is to fill all the blank squares with the correct numbers. Several of the 9 x 9 grid squares already contain numbers -- you cannot change these. To work the puzzle, fill in the empty squares of the grid with the numerals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9.

The puzzle is solved when each **ROW** and each **COLUMN**, and each **3 x 3** square within the puzzle contain the numerals 1 through 9 with each numeral appearing only once. **Good Luck!**



**Did you know.....**  
The city of Pittsburgh was the *first* city in the world to do a lot of neat things? Here are a few of the best known!

**Mr. Yuk Sticker - 1971**

Mr Yuk was created at the Poison Center at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh after research indicated that the skull and crossbones previously used to identify poisons had little meaning to children who equate the symbol with exciting things like pirates and adventure.

**First Night World Series Game - 1971**

Game 4 of the 1971 World Series was the first night game in World Series history, a series that Pittsburgh went on to win, 4 games to 3.

**First U.S. Public Television Station - 1954**

WQED, operated by the Metropolitan Pittsburgh Educational Station, was the first community-sponsored educational television station in America.

**First U.S. Commercial Radio Station - 1920**

Dr. Frank Conrad, assistant chief engineer of Westinghouse Electric, first constructed a transmitter and installed it in a garage near his home in Wilkesburg in 1916. The station was licensed as 8XK. At 6 p.m. on Nov. 2, 1920, 8XK became KDKA Radio and began broadcasting at 100 watts from a make-shift shack atop one of the Westinghouse manufacturing buildings in East Pittsburgh.

**First Big Mac - 1967**

Created by Jim Delligatti at his Uniontown McDonald's, the Big Mac debuted and was test marketed in three other Pittsburgh-area McDonald's restaurants in 1967. By 1968 it was a mainstay on McDonald's menus throughout the country.

**First Pull-Tab on Cans - 1962**

The pull-tab was developed by Alcoa and was first used by Iron City Brewery in 1962. For many years, pull-tabs were only used in this area.

**First Baseball Stadium in the U.S. - 1909**

In 1909 the first baseball stadium, Forbes Field, was built in Pittsburgh, followed soon by similar stadiums in Chicago, Cleveland, Boston, and New York.

**First Retractable Dome - 1961**

Pittsburgh's Civic Arena boasts the world's first auditorium with a retractable roof.



**Adults with ADD for Pittsburgh & Tri State Area  
CHADD International Chapter #477  
Upcoming Meetings**

**August 30, 2007**

"Sharing Tips about What Works & Frustrations about What Doesn't!"  
Breaking into Focus Groups for New Attendees, Spouses, Significant Others, & Supporters of ADDers, or Everyday Living w/ ADD"

**Speaker:** Open Forum

**September 27, 2007**

Speaker and Topic to be Announced

**October 25, 2007**

"Practical Ways to Improve Your Memory"

**Speaker:** Dr. Carol Utay, Executive Director  
Total Learning Centers

Regular Meetings are held the 4th Thursday of each month at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, Room 292, 3811 O'Hara St. at DeSoto St. in Oakland (7:00 to 9:30 pm). For additional information or for a complete listing of 2007 meetings, contact Leslie Stone at 412-682-6282 or please visit [www.pittsburghadd.org](http://www.pittsburghadd.org)



**If you need to change or cancel your study appointment, please call the PALS scheduling line at 412-246-5656.**

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