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Scheduling Line
(412) 246-5656**

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PALS NEWSLETTER

Volume 6, Issue 2

May 2010

“MY SON IS 28 YEARS OLD.....Why am I still participating?” Many of you no doubt wonder, if you haven’t asked us already, why we still ask parents to participate in the PALS. All of the people in the PALS are now young adults. None of the participants are younger than 18. Most participants are between 20 and 30 years old, and a few are over 30 years old. Why on earth would we continue to want parents’ opinions? There is a method to our madness (doesn’t that invoke images of the “mad scientist?”). We realize that our questionnaires may become taxing, but we continue to stick with our procedures for a number of reasons. **First**, the PALS is a longitudinal study. That means that we are following people over a long period of time to study how they change with age and with time. In longitudinal studies, it is very important to keep the methods of the study consistent over time. If we change our procedures mid-stream, then we will not be able to separate changes in our data that are really due to people changing, from changes in our data that were caused by a change in our study procedures. What we want to measure are the former – changes in our data that reflect people changing over time.

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Tracey Wilson receives 2010 WPIC Research Staff Member of the Year Award

Tracey Wilson, Coordinator of the PALS Study and the Youth and Family Research Program (YFRP) received Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic’s annual Clinical Excellence Award as Research Staff Member of the Year for 2010. The award was presented by Dr. David Lewis, Chairman of the Department of Psychiatry who noted Tracey’s more than 20 year tenure at WPIC and recognized her advocacy on behalf of research participants, passion and dedication to the YFRP’s mission to provide answers to families affected by ADHD, and mentoring of junior faculty members. Congratulations, Tracey!



05/17/2010

Pictured (L to R): Tracey Wilson, Hermi Woodward, Assistant Director of Research, WPIC, Brooke Molina, Ph.D., David Lewis, M.D., Chairman, Department of Psychiatry

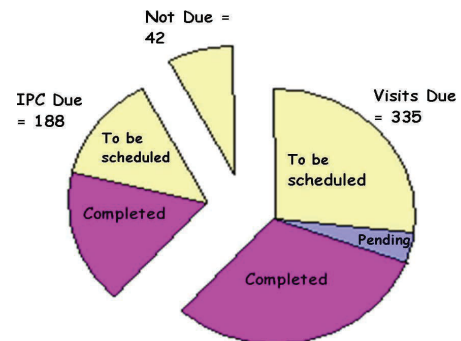
Study update In November, we began our second year of age-based, rather than annual interviews. For the 12 months from November 1st, 2009 through October 31st, 2010, approximately 60% of our entire group of young adults will be eligible for a visit, 33% will be due for an interim phone contact (IPC). These are phone calls we make to keep in touch with participants during those years that they are not due for a visit. Eligibility for visits and IPCs is based on participant age and the amount of time that is projected to lapse between visits.

Of the young adults—335—who eligible for a visit this year, 169, or about 50% have already been completed and another 22 are scheduled. We have completed 100 of the 188 IPCs proposed for the year, or 53%.

Around the first of each month, we send out letters to participants who are due for either a visit or a phone contact—if you receive a letter and are interested in scheduling, please call the PALS line at 412-246-5656.

NOTE TO PARENTS: we will delay scheduling your visit until **after** your son or daughter's has been conducted.

PALS Progress
November, 2009 - October, 2010



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“MY SON IS 28 YEARS OLD...Why am I still participating?”

Second, our study is different from most longitudinal studies in that we seek more than just the participants' opinion about themselves. We all know that in our day-to-day lives, our opinions of ourselves are not always the same as those held by others. From Day 1, we made a concerted effort in this study to collect information from our participants that recognize the whole family perspective. Thus, in the beginning we asked adolescents as well as parents about the environment in the household. Now that those adolescents are young adults, we want to know about adulthood functioning from the perspective of the parent as well as the young adult. We absolutely recognize that for certain things, one perspective will be better than another. For example, symptoms of anxiety and depression are usually best reported by the person experiencing those symptoms. When we analyze data, we always consider the availability of multiple reports in the data and which ones are most appropriate for the particular analysis being conducted. When discrepancies arise, we talk about them in the conclusions section of the scientific article.

Third, we have to consider the longitudinal nature of the study, the need to keep our procedures consistent, and balance those demands with the usefulness of the parents' report as the children age. It would not be a good idea to just drop parent report when adolescents become adults, but it also is foolhardy to ask parents to continue completing the same big set of questionnaires year after year. Thus, we strike compromises along the way. As the son or daughter ages toward the 30s, we continue to decrease the number of questionnaires administered. This eases the burden and it also allows us to focus efforts on the measures with the most relevance at that age. Some measures are written so generally that it allows parents to

answer them whether or not frequent contact occurs between parent and son/daughter. For example, most parents can answer generally how they think their son or daughter is doing, for their age, with regard to educational or work-related life goals. However, it is sometimes harder to answer more specific questions, and we understand that. Why do we keep some of these harder, more specific, questions? One reason, you can now answer, is for consistency over time in study methods. The other answer, however, is because our young adults are in all kinds of living arrangements and have extremely variable relationships with their parents. For adults who still live at home, or who have very frequent contact with their parents, the highly specific questions are easier for their parents to answer. When contact is infrequent, parents may feel that they just can't answer a question(s). We understand. Please feel free to indicate that you simply cannot answer the question. Then we will mark the question as purposefully skipped (“DK”) rather than as “missing data” that needs to be followed up. So, for consistency of study procedures over time, for valid interpretation of our data, and to maintain the ability to see multiple perspectives, we continue to solicit parent participation. We hope that you find these explanations to be helpful next time you sit down with a packet of our questionnaires. We appreciate the time that you take to answer our many questions, and we hope that this article increases your understanding of the “method to our madness.” Should you have any questions or comments, please always feel free to email us. –

Brooke Molina, Ph.D.

Study Findings: Investigation of Promising New Therapy for Adults with ADHD in Romantic Relationships

Scientists have clearly demonstrated the most effective ways to treat ADHD in childhood. We know that stimulant medication as well as working with parents and teachers on fine-tuning child management strategies are the “best practices” for helping youth with ADHD. However, much less is known about how to treat ADHD in adulthood. At this time, stimulant medication is considered the “first line” of care for adults. However, research has shown that adults with ADHD often choose not to take medication, and that it is only helpful 20-50% of the time. For these reasons, researchers have begun to explore alternative, non-medication therapies for adult ADHD. One such alternative treatment is known as cognitive-behavioral therapy or CBT. CBT for adult ADHD focuses on the use of self control strategies to improve organization skills while also reducing inattention and avoidance. Early studies suggest that such CBT may be helpful with reducing ADHD symptoms. Unfortunately, there is no evidence that CBT improves common difficulties in the day to day lives of adults with ADHD (e.g., conflict with romantic partner/spouse) and we do not know if CBT really helps adults with ADHD who are not taking medication. Given these limitations, researchers at the Youth and Family Research Program (YFRP) set out to create and evaluate a new and improved non-medication therapy for adults with ADHD.

Dr. Brian Wymbs, a postdoctoral researcher working with the YFRP, and Dr. Brooke Molina, the Director of the YFRP, developed a 6-session weekly treatment for adult ADHD that involves romantic partners/spouses of adults with ADHD. Notably, partners are not asked to be therapists. Rather, treatment focuses on improving communication and problem-solving in the relationship, particularly about issues related to ADHD behavior (e.g., not getting things done around the house, forgetting to pay bills) and about enhancing the relationship in view of individual strengths and limitations. Sessions also review self-control (e.g., monitoring distractibility during conversations) and organization strategies (e.g., prioritizing “to-do” lists). Couples meet in small groups with no more than 3-6 couples at a time. The treatment was developed to be administered in group sessions to allow adults to share ideas and provide support to one another.

Fourteen couples have participated in this new program. They have been 18-35 year old adults in which at least one member of the couple has high ADHD symptom scores. Interestingly, not only did every couple include at least one adult with

difficulties paying attention and/or being impulsive and restless, but most (9/14=64%) of the couples actually included two adults with these characteristics. So far, because data have only been collected for 14 couples, findings are preliminary but they are encouraging. These findings suggest that couples seemed to enjoy the program and adults with ADHD responded fairly well to it. Most of the group sessions (95%) had complete attendance, including both members of each couple. Most couples also arrived on time for sessions (80%) and completed the between-session homework assignments (84%). Additionally, participants were quite satisfied with the weekly group instruction, content, and contributions from fellow group members. Females and males with ADHD symptoms reported notable improvements in their ability to pay attention and manage their symptoms by the end of treatment, though females felt their inattention improved more than males. Male partners of females with ADHD symptoms corroborated their partner’s improvement in inattention while female partners of males with ADHD symptoms also felt their partners were better able to manage their restlessness/impulsivity. Not only did ADHD symptoms improve, but impairment in romantic relationship functioning did as well. Specifically, both males and females with ADHD symptoms felt much less negative about their romantic relationships at the end of treatment. Male partners of females with ADHD also felt their partners yelled at or insulted them less after treatment.

In sum, our early findings suggest that the new couples group program seems to help reduce symptoms of ADHD and relationship difficulties that accompany these characteristics. Though these results are very encouraging, more investigations are needed to more rigorously test the program. These findings are limited by the small number of participants so far, but we are currently writing a federal grant application to help support further development and testing of this promising program.



*Brian Wymbs, Ph.D.
Post Doctoral Scholar
University of Pittsburgh*



Summer events in the Pittsburgh area

With summer approaching, Pittsburgh and the surrounding areas have events that are happening all around town. Here are a few:

Three Rivers Arts Festival ~ June 4 - 13.

Performances include:

- ◆ **6/4 @ 12pm & 5pm** Spin Cycle – classic music from the 60's, 70's, and 80's at the Katz Plaza
- ◆ **6/5 @ 5pm** Gene Ludwig – high energy blues at the Theater Square
- ◆ **6/6 @ 12:15pm & 3:15pm** Caribbean Vibes Steelpan Workshop at the WQED tent
- ◆ **6/6 @ 6pm** Dirty Dozen Brass Band from New Orleans at the Dollar Bank Stage
- ◆ **6/7 @ 8pm** One World Tribe – hip hop and reggae music at the Dollar Bank Stage
- ◆ **6/9 @ 12pm** Clinton Clegg and the Backstabbing Good People – folk and soul music at the Dollar Bank Stage
- ◆ **6/11 @ 12pm** NoMaD – hard rockin' country at the Dollar Bank Stage
- ◆ **6/11 @ 8pm** Kris Kristofferson – country music at the Dollar Bank Stage
- ◆ **6/12 @ 12:15pm, 2:15pm & 4:15pm** African Drum and Dance Workshop – UMOJA African Arts Company at the WQED tent
- ◆ **6/13 @ 6pm & 7:30pm** Michael Jackson tribute

For more info, go to www.artsfestival.net.

Three Rivers Regatta ~ July 3-4.

The tri-state comes alive in one fast, fun-filled and **FREE** festival of spectacular air, land and water entertainment. Featuring the skydiving, B.A.S.E. jumping and paragliding thrills of the extreme Redbull Airforce Team. And, back in the biggest way ever—the menacing “Rockets on the River” thrills of tunnel boat racing, as Regatta hosts the Powerboat Superleague North American Championships! On July 4, see the “Greatest Glow On Earth”—the EQT “Flashes of Freedom” Fireworks Fantasia, renown as one of the best pyrotechnic displays in the country.... the wildly popular “Anything that Floats” races, bass tournament, dragon boat racing and more. It's the summer's largest family extravaganza! Check out www.threeriversregatta.net for a schedule of events.

Free Concerts sponsored by the county ~

- ◆ South Park (412) 835-4810
6/12 - Spiderman 1 & 2 at the Agricultural Hall

Free Concerts *Continued* ~

8/13 - Marcia Ball Band (blues & rock)

- ◆ Hartwood Acres (412) 767-9200
6/20 - Hometown Music Festival
6/26 - Pittsburgh Symphony
7/23-25 - Pittsburgh Blues Festival
- ◆ North Park (724) 935-1766
7/7 - Big Band Bash with Rick Purcell at the Ice rink
8/4 - Big Band Bash with Joe Lagnase at the Ice rink
- ◆ Boyce Park (724) 327-0338
7/17 - 8th Annual Monroeville Jazz Festival at the Wave Pool Lot

Free movies in the park ~ Grab a blanket and head out for an unforgettable evening of cinema under the stars. Pittsburgh City-park's *Cinema in the Park* features popular family-friendly movies at seven Pittsburgh area parks - Schenley Park at Flagstaff Hill, Arsenal Park in Lawrenceville, Brookline Memorial Park, East Liberty, Grandview Park in Mt. Washington, Riverview Park in Observatory Hill and West End/Elliott Overlook. Movies are shown seven days a week (a different park each night) and run from the second weekend in June through the end of August. Best of all - they're free!

For more information, please call (412) 422-6426 or visit www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us.

Festivals ~ throughout the Pittsburgh area this summer include:

- ◆ Mammoth Fest: Arts, crafts, food music, and entertainment for the whole family. Children can have access to the petting zoo with carnival and pony rides at a cost of \$4. Located at Mammoth Park near Greensburg on June 6 from 11am-7pm. For more info, call (724) 830-3950.
- ◆ Children's Activity Day: There will be games, music, and a scavenger hunt at the McGinley and McCully historic log houses. This is located on McGinley Rd. in Monroeville occurring on June 27 from 1-4pm. For more info, call (412) 245-1527.
- ◆ Summer Jams: Walnut Street in Shadyside on June 26 from 7-11pm. For more info, call (412) 321-4422.

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



Tentative Meeting Dates ~

June 24, 2010

July 22, 2010

August 25, 2010

**Presenters
to be announced**

Meetings are held on the 4th Thursday of each month at WPIC, Room 292, 3811 O'Hara at DeSoto St in Oakland from 7:00 to 9:30 pm.

Parking is available in the Soldiers & Sailors Parking Garage, at the corner of O'Hara & Bigelow

For more details about specific meeting dates and topics, please contact Leslie Stone at (412) 682-6282 or visit www.pittsburghadd.org

MOVING?

If you have moved, plan on moving or changed your telephone number, please call our PALS study line at (412) 246-5656 to provide us with updated information.



Need to Schedule Your Study Visit?



If you would like to schedule your study appointment or need to change or cancel your existing appointment, call the PALS study line at (412) 246-5656.

Sudoku Classic

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

GAMEPLAY: The object of the game is to fill all the blank squares with the correct numbers. 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 1-9 with each numeral appearing only once.

SOLUTION:
An answer key is available on our website at www.youthandfamilyresearch.com. From our home page on the website, select *Studies*, click on *PALS Newsletters* and you will see *Sudoku Puzzle Answer Key*.

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