



PALS NEWSLETTER

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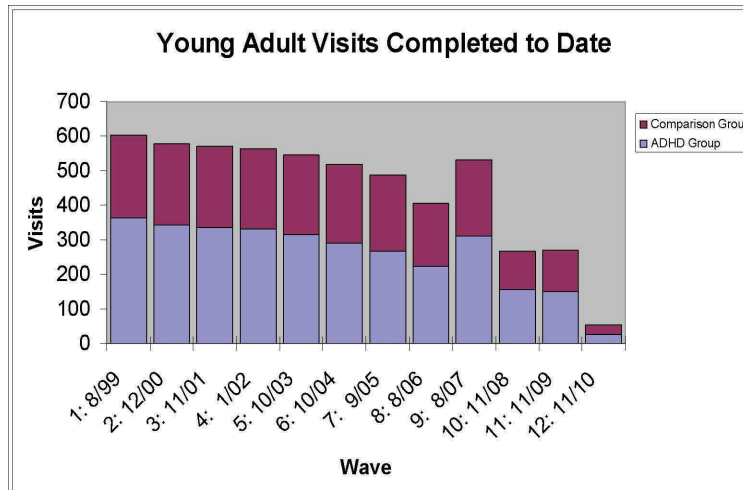
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Study Update

As of November, 2010, we are into our third year of conducting age-based interviews. As you may remember, we are now only interviewing young adult participants (and one parent) who are approximately 25, 27, 30, and 35. For the period 11/1/10 - 10/31/11, 270 young adults will be due for a visit. Three and a half months into that period (as of mid February, 2011), we have completed 89 visits, so are just slightly ahead of schedule.

The chart below details the number of young adult visits that have been conducted each year since Wave 1 of the study began in August, 1999. The larger number of visits conducted prior to October, 2008 reflect the first nine years of the study when annual interviews were conducted with everyone.



proved to be quite helpful—thanks to everyone who has responded to these calls!

On March 1st, letters will go out to participants who are due for either a visit or phone contact in March—if you receive a letter and are interested in scheduling, please call the PALS scheduling line at 412-246-5656. NOTE TO PARENTS: We will delay scheduling your visit until after your son or daughter’s visit has been conducted.

PALS fMRI Pilot Study

Recently the Youth and Family Research Program has begun collaborations with a number of neuroscientists to study the brain functioning of our research participants. This type of research, conducted using MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), has become very popular in the last 10-20 years because MRI technology has developed rapidly. Researchers are now trying to understand what parts of the brain are responsible for various



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PALS

Scheduling Line
(412) 246-5656

Visit our Website
www.youthandfamilyresearch.com



Staff Updates

We have had some recent staff changes in the PALS Study. **Kendal Kingsley**, an interviewer with the study since 2006 recently completed a Master's degree in Counseling Psychology and has taken a position as a therapist with a transplant unit at Presby. We are pleased to welcome two newly hired interviewers, **Lacy Blazetic** and **Stephanie Miller** to the PALS Study. Lacy received a degree in Psychology from Case Western Reserve University and while there, was involved in research focused on depressed adolescents and their families. Stephanie is an honors graduate of Allegheny College, where she majored in Psychology and Religious Studies. While in college, she was the Children's Program Coordinator for Women's Services, Inc. We are also happy to welcome former PALS interviewer **Erika Greisenegger Zeranski** back to the Youth and Family Research Program where she will be coordinating Dr. Michael Marshal's LEAP Study. Erika worked for PALS from 2001 until 2006 when she moved to New York City. She worked as a Research Clinical Coordinator at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine until 2009 and spent several months living in Dubai before returning to her hometown.



Did you know that Steeler Fans are Champions when it comes to recycling?

Fans recycled 8 TONS of material outside Heinz Field during final five home games! Pittsburgh has another winning effort to celebrate this month: football fans diverted nearly 8 tons of recyclables from landfills by gathering aluminum, glass, plastic and cardboard containers at recent Steelers tailgate parties.

Since the campaign kickoff on December 12th, the "Let's Tackle Recycling" crew gathered approximately 16,000 pounds of recyclables in Heinz Field parking lots during the final three regular season home games and two playoff games.



Eight tons or 16,000 pounds....
is approximately:

- 173,000 aluminum cans
- 9,000 glass bottles
- 64,000 plastic bottles
- 1,600 lbs of cardboard

"Let's Tackle Recycling" is sponsored by the PRC, the Alcoa Foundation in partnership with Alcoa Parking, City of Pittsburgh Environmental Services, Greenstar, Pittsburgh Steelers and the Sports & Exhibition Authority.

PALS fMRI Pilot Study

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behaviors and emotions. We have launched several studies that make use of this technology and the expertise of our collaborators. Two of these studies have special interest in the adulthood functioning of the participants we have been following since childhood.

Over the course of the past two years, we have conducted a pilot study with a small group of PALS participants using Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI). fMRI measures changes in blood oxygenation in the brain *while* tasks are being performed. So far, 40 PALS young adults have been scanned. While in the scanner, they completed simple tasks that measure attention and memory. We hope that the results of the pilot study will help us understand how the brain works in young adults with and without ADHD and will allow us to determine the possibility of conducting a similar, larger study.



We recently interviewed one of the young men who participated in the pilot study so that his experience could be shared.

What did you find interesting about your scan experience?

The scan table itself was surprisingly comfortable and the short exercises were kind of fun.

What surprised you about the scan or the visit?

The efficiency of all the parties involved, the whole process moved very smoothly and quickly.

How did you feel about the time length required to complete the visit?

It honestly flew by and I actually got to take a small nap during the scan.

What did it feel like to be in the scanner?

It is what I thought flying in a spaceship would feel like when I was a kid. Surprisingly open and you can see out of both ends.

What did you think about the tasks that were presented while you were in the scanner?

They were amusing but really easy to perform.

Was the MRI experience what you expected?

I went in with a very open mind, but overall it was a nice experience.

What advice would you give to another participant who is interested in participating in the fMRI pilot?

Get a good night's sleep before the scan.



Need Help Filing Your Taxes?

Income Tax Assistance is available through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. VITA is a program comprised of volunteers that offers free tax assistance to people that cannot afford professional assistance in filing their taxes.

Volunteers help to prepare basic tax returns for individuals with low to moderate incomes (generally, \$49,000 and below). VITA sites are typically located at community and neighborhood centers, libraries, schools, shopping malls, and other convenient locations.

For more information, or to find VITA program locations in Allegheny County, visit the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare website at <http://www.dpw.state.pa.us> and enter the Keyword "VITA".



For additional information including other locations, please call 1-800-829-1040.

Congratulations Kellie!



The PALS Study recently celebrated the pending arrival of Baby Spontak. Kellie has been with the PALS study since its inception in 1999. This is our first PALS Baby!



**PALS Study-Molina
University of Pittsburgh
200 Meyran Building
Suite 400
3811 O'Hara St.
Pittsburgh, PA 15213**

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