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PALS Scheduling Line (412) 246-5656

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PALS NEWSLETTER

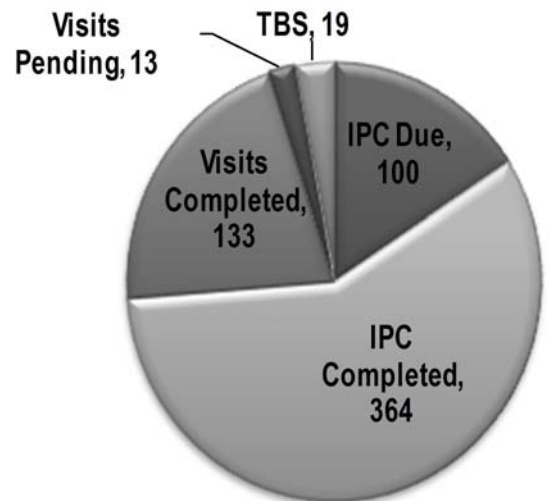
Volume 12, Issue 4

November 2016

Study Update

Progress This Year: September, 2016 marked the end of our seventeenth year of data collection. From September 1, 2015 through August 31, 2016, 119 of our 594 active participants were eligible for a visit. As of 11/11/16, we completed 98 of those visits (82%). Parent visits were conducted for 64 of these visits (66%). 35 additional visits were completed and 13 visits are pending (interviews scheduled or questionnaire packets have been sent out to the participant). We completed interim phone contacts (IPCs) with an additional 364 participants. So during the past year, we maintained contact with 475 or 80% of our active participants.

PALS Progress 9/1/2015-11/11/2016



New Reporters: Beginning in March, 2014, with the young adult's permission, we began inviting other important people in their life to participate in PALS. Since we began this process, almost all of the young adults we have interviewed have given permission for us to contact a friend/partner. We have requested this information from friends/partners for 284 of our participants, and as of last month, have received questionnaires back for 184 (65%) of them. The information we ask for is quite brief and may be done electronically- we email a link to online questionnaires. Friends are paid \$20 for participating and romantic partners, who have a few extra questions to answer, are paid \$25.



Holiday Greetings from the PALS Study in the mail soon!

In December, we will be sending out our PALS holiday calendar and gift cards to participants. A WePay debit card with cash out instructions will be included with the calendar (the same payment cards that you receive after a visit or phone contact update). This is a small token of our appreciation for your continued participation in the study and to wish you and yours a happy, healthy holiday season! If you have recently had a visit or IPC, please be sure to keep the cards separate as they will be for different amounts and have different PIN numbers.

We also encourage you to cash out your UPMC payment cards as soon as possible! If the card isn't used by its expiration date ("Valid Thru" date on front of card), funds will be lost.

Please call us at (412) 246-5656 if you have any questions.



In Praise of Gratitude

Expressing thanks may be one of the simplest ways to feel better.



The Thanksgiving holiday began, as the name implies, when the colonists gave thanks for their survival and for a good harvest. So perhaps November is a good time to review the mental health benefits of gratitude — and to consider some advice about how to cultivate this state of mind.

The word gratitude is derived from the Latin word *gratia*, which means grace, graciousness, or gratefulness (depending on the context). In some ways gratitude encompasses all of these meanings. Gratitude is a thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, whether tangible or intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. In the process, people usually recognize that the source of that goodness lies at least partially outside themselves. As a result, gratitude also helps people connect to something larger than themselves as individuals — whether to other people, nature, or a higher power.

In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.

People feel and express gratitude in multiple ways. They can apply it to the past (retrieving positive memories and being thankful for elements of childhood or past blessings), the present (not taking good fortune for granted as it comes), and the future (maintaining a hopeful and optimistic attitude). Regardless of the inherent or current level of someone's gratitude, it's a quality that individuals can successfully cultivate further.

Research on gratitude

Two psychologists, Dr. Robert A. Emmons of the University of California, Davis, and Dr. Michael E. McCullough of the University of Miami, have done much of the research on gratitude. In one study, they asked all participants to write a few sentences each week, focusing on particular topics.

One group wrote about things they were grateful for that had occurred during the week. A second group wrote about daily irritations or things that had displeased them, and the third wrote about events that had affected them (with no emphasis on them being positive or negative). After 10 weeks, those who wrote about gratitude were more optimistic and felt better about their lives. Surprisingly, they also exercised more and had fewer visits to physicians than those who focused on sources of aggravation.

Another leading researcher in this field, Dr. Martin E. P. Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, tested the impact of various positive psychology interventions on 411 people, each compared with a control assignment of writing about early memories. When their week's assignment was to write and personally deliver a letter of gratitude to someone who had never been properly thanked for his or her kindness, participants immediately exhibited a huge increase in happiness scores. This impact was greater than that from any other intervention, with benefits lasting for a month.

Of course, studies such as this one cannot prove cause and effect. But most of the studies published on this topic support an association between gratitude and an individual's well-being.

Other studies have looked at how gratitude can improve relationships. For example, a study of couples found that individuals who took time to express gratitude for their partner not only felt more positive toward the other person but also felt more comfortable expressing concerns about their relationship.

Managers who remember to say "thank you" to people who work for them may find that those employees feel motivated to work harder.

Ways to cultivate gratitude

Gratitude is a way for people to appreciate what they have instead of always reaching for something new in the hopes it will make them happier, or thinking they can't feel satisfied until every physical and material need is met. Gratitude helps people refocus on what they have instead of what they lack. And, although it may feel contrived at first, this mental state grows stronger with use and practice.

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Study Findings: Patterns of Outcomes in Young Adulthood

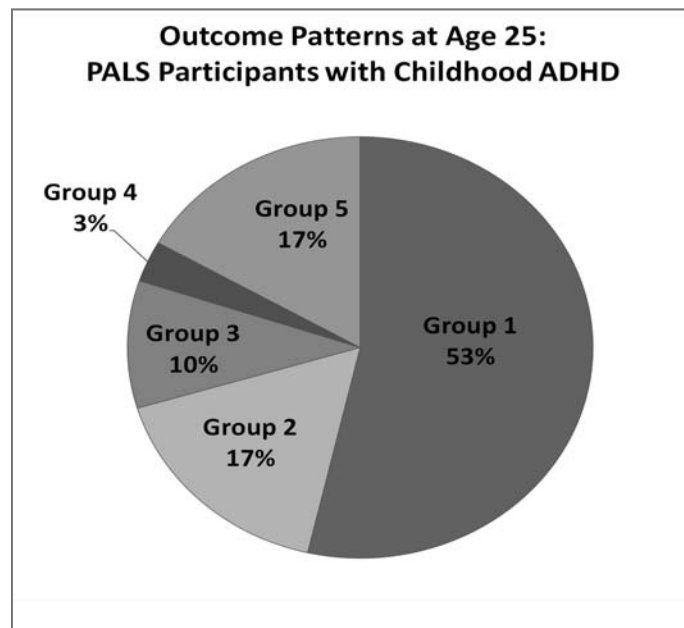


In young adulthood, individuals may struggle with a variety of specific problems such as substance use, law-breaking, social difficulties, academic achievement, and financial problems. Research shows that young adults who had childhood ADHD are more likely to have some of these problems *on average*.

In the PALS Study, we wanted to know more about the nature of these difficulties and to see if there were any specific *patterns* experienced by our participants with childhood ADHD. We are also interested in knowing how many young adults with ADHD histories are doing pretty well on important outcomes in adulthood. Are the same individuals struggling in multiple areas—are those who are having trouble with substance use also the individuals having peer difficulties? To answer these questions, we reviewed the data that was collected from 317 PALS participants with a childhood history of ADHD at their age 25 visit. Our goal was to determine whether different patterns emerged and if so, how extensive each pattern was. Specifically, we looked at substance use (alcohol use, binge drinking, cigarette smoking, marijuana use), law-breaking behavior, social difficulties (strained maternal relationship, difficulties with peers, risky sexual behavior), highest education achieved, and financial dependence on parents.

We were able to identify five different outcome patterns as reported by our aged-25 young adults and their parents. Specifically, these five groups are (see graph): 1) average ADHD young adults (about 50% of our participants) who had low substance use, low law-breaking behavior, and moderate social difficulties; 2) a group with moderate alcohol use, moderate cigarette smoking, but otherwise low impairment (about 17% of participants); 3) individuals who use marijuana about once per day, engage in moderate cigarette smoking, and are financially dependent on parents (about 10% of our participants); 4) individuals who engage in a high number of law-breaking acts and are financially dependent but have very low alcohol use (about 3% of our participants); and 5) a group of individuals who have high substance use, some law-breaking behavior, and report risky sexual behavior (about 17% of our participants).

Based on these patterns, we found that two-thirds of the young adults with childhood ADHD appear to have an absence of major impairments in key areas of adult functioning (groups 1 and 2 above). We also found that rates of substance use, conflicts with peers, and law-breaking behavior were the outcomes where the groups typically differed from each other. Given this research, more work is needed to figure out how to identify which children may end up with which outcomes in young adulthood. Also, this research shows that substance use prevention/intervention and social skills interventions may be important for adolescents and young adults with ADHD histories. We hope that these ongoing analyses allow us to identify what leads to positive outcomes or risky outcomes in young adulthood to promote mental health and improve daily functioning throughout the lifespan.



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In Praise of Gratitude

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Here are some ways to cultivate gratitude on a regular basis.

Write a thank-you note. You can make yourself happier and nurture your relationship with another person by writing a thank-you letter expressing your enjoyment and appreciation of that person's impact on your life. Send it, or better yet, deliver and read it in person if possible. Make a habit of sending at least one gratitude letter a month. Once in a while, write one to yourself.



Thank someone mentally. No time to write? It may help just to think about someone who has done something nice for you, and mentally thank the individual.

Keep a gratitude journal. Make it a habit to write down or share with a loved one thoughts about the gifts you've received each day.

Count your blessings. Pick a time every week to sit down and write about your blessings — reflecting on what went right or what you are grateful for. Sometimes it helps to pick a number — such as three to five things — that you will identify each week. As you write, be specific and think about the sensations you felt when something good happened to you.

Pray. People who are religious can use prayer to cultivate gratitude.

Meditate. Mindfulness meditation involves focusing on the present moment without judgment. Although people often focus on a word or phrase (such as "peace"), it is also possible to focus on what you're grateful for (the warmth of the sun, a pleasant sound, etc.).

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Holiday Events Around Town



Highmark First Night 2017: Highmark First Night Pittsburgh, a production of the Pittsburgh Cultural Trust, is an arts-focused and family-friendly New Year's Eve celebration in downtown Pittsburgh's Cultural District. It is the largest single-day celebration in the region offering around 150 events at nearly 50 indoor and outdoor locations within the 14-block Cultural District. For more information, go to www.firstnightpgh.org.

Carnegie Science Center Miniature Railroad & Village: This beloved display features hundreds of wonderfully realistic animated scenes that illustrate how people lived, worked, and played in our region during the 1880s to the late 1930s. A replica of Crawford Grill, the renowned Hill District jazz club from 1937 to 1951, is the latest gem added to this extraordinary display.



Phipps Conservatory Winter Light Garden: The most magical time of the year arrives with the opening of Winter Flower Show and Light Garden on Fri., Nov. 25. Built around a whimsical "Snow Day at Phipps" theme, the changing exhibit rooms will feature topiary penguins and bears frolicking in showcases of LED lights, decorated fir trees and, of course, plenty of seasonal favorites such as colorful poinsettias, and showy amaryllis. Daily hours for Winter Flower Show are 9:30 a.m. - 11 p.m. and 5 - 11 p.m. for Winter Light Garden.

Kennywood's Holiday Lights: Kennywood will once again be transformed into a wonderland of dazzling light displays, family friendly activities and seasonal food favorites. New this year, visit Kennywood's Gingerbread Village. For a complete operating schedule, ride list and ticket information, visit www.kennywood.com.



CHADD OF PITTSBURGH
ADULTS WITH ADD/ADHD

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

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.

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

MOVING?

If you have moved, plan on moving or changed your phone 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

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

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*.



PALS Study
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