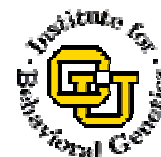




CAP News



Summer 2003

Issue # 30

Testing Schedule

AGE	TIME	TYPE
16	4 hrs	In-person
17	4 hrs	In-person
18-21	1.5 hrs	Phone
22-30	45 min	Phone
Parent	30 min	Phone

Highlights 2002-03:

- 1,250 tests completed, including 475 parent interviews.
- 25 papers, abstracts & book chapters published.
- 415 families participated, 85% of the original number.

Nature, nurture, and early adolescence

A new collection of studies on the CAP has been published by Oxford University Press entitled "Nature, Nurture, and the Transition to Early Adolescence". The book contains 17 research studies on different aspects of early adolescence (9-14 years of age), including studies of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development.

From the jacket:

"Since 1976 CAP has generated a large body of research by comparing 245 adopted children and 245 control children. It is the only longitudinal adoption study that examines development continually from birth to adolescence. The powerful adoption design

used in CAP makes it possible to study the extent to which both genes and environments shape development, broaching the fundamental issues of nature and nurture."

Some of the data analyzed in this volume were collected from CAP participants more than 18 years ago! The reason it takes this long is that complete data sets must be obtained before analysis can be done. The data then

must be cataloged in a way that ensures confidentiality and access for researchers. Researchers from universities around the world contributed to the current book.

Of course the biggest contributor is you! Your participation and efforts have greatly expanded our knowledge about human behavior and development, and we thank you for your ongoing contributions.

If you would like to read *Nature, Nurture, and the Transition to Early Adolescence*, we have several copies in our library that we would be happy to loan to you. Please contact us to arrange this, or let us know the next time you visit.



The painting *Crossing the Pasture* by Winslow Homer, from the jacket cover.

It runs in the family: Telephone interview taps social, familial views

"Capital Punishment should be completely abolished." Do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree? By now most of you have experienced questions like these in the NNSD (Nature, Nurture and Social Demog-

raphy) interview. This phone interview covers a wide range of topics, including questions about family life, social issues, religion, work, and relationships. The interview is designed to look at trends between family members. Researchers are trying to

understand if some attitudes and beliefs are passed down genetically in families. Through behavioral genetics analyses it has been shown that traits such as intelligence, risk taking and reading ability have a genetic component. It stands to reason that

attitudes may also be passed down in the genes. Once the interviews are complete, researchers will begin comparing the results to see which attitudes have a strong genetic component and which ones are more influenced by the environment.

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When the CAP got off the ground in 1976, no one knew that 27 years later it would still be going strong. After all, the CAP started as a 5 year study, funded by several pilot grants from the William T Grant Foundation and the National Institute of Mental Health. As the years went on, granting agencies realized the unique potential of the study and contributed additional funding. Today, the CAP has been the recipient of grants from eight different federal and private funding agencies. It is considered a landmark study in the field, and results from the CAP are cited in most behavioral genetics textbooks studied in universities today.

Many participants ask us "When will this study be over?" The answer to this question is uncertain, the project will continue as long as grants continue supporting it. Currently there are grants in place to continue collecting phone data until participants are 30 years old. That's quite a leap from the original 5 year timeline! Thank you for making this project such a unique and successful one.

Environment: A mirror of personality

Events that happen in life, in the environment, fall into two categories. There are non-controllable events, such as the death of a family member or an illness, and there are events that are more controllable, such as marriage and job promotion. In the following CAP study, researchers looked at both types of events to see how much an individual's personality impacted the types of events he or she experienced.

Two questionnaires were used to look at different life events. One questionnaire, the SRRQ (Social Readjustment

Rating Questionnaire) assessed major life events, such as beginning school, deaths in the family, and moving. The second questionnaire, the LESA (Life Events Scale for Adolescents) measured the impact of more minor events, such as dating, changes in friendships, and fights with siblings. The SRRQ measured mostly non-controllable events, whereas the LESA measured predominantly

controllable events.

Researchers found that events from the SRRQ, non-controllable events, had no genetic component whatsoever. However, events from the LESA were affected by genetic factors. Siblings in non-adopted families experienced more similar types and numbers of events than did siblings in adoptive families.



New research is showing that environment can reflect as well as affect characteristics of individuals.

Environments and experiences, however, have no DNA, so how

can they be influenced by genetics? Researchers believe the answer is that the environment is not independent of the individual. Individuals play an active role in creating their own environments. By choosing situations or activities that reflect personality traits, the environment one experiences actually becomes a mirror of his or her personality.

Genetic Influences on Life Events in Middle Childhood and Early Adolescence. Saudino, K., Gagne, J., and Becker, M. In Nature, Nurture, and the Transition to Early Adolescence, 2003, pp. 280-294.