

Colorado Family Studies News



University of Colorado
Institute for Behavioral Genetics

Summer 2006

Who is Participating?

A unique study design combines four distinct groups of participants.



Four separate groups participate in the Colorado Family Studies.

Over the course of the Colorado Family Studies we have interviewed nearly 9,000 individuals! Participants are members of several separate and unique studies that are ongoing at the Institute for Behavioral Genetics (IBG). By working with a diverse groups of participants, we are able to combine data and models of data analysis. This leads to a more global approach to our investigations of behavioral and health issues. A main focus of our current research is to understand the genetic and environmental influences on problem behaviors such as Conduct Disorder, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder and Substance Use and Abuse.

Longitudinal Twin Study (LTS) These are twins and siblings of twins who have been in the research project at the IBG since birth. Twins in this project are currently aged 15 to 21. Approximately 400 families with twins are currently enrolled and actively participating.

Community Twin Study (CTS) These are twins and siblings of twins who were living throughout Colorado at the time of initial enrollment in the project. Participants have been interviewed by researchers at IBG in the past. Twins in this project are aged 18 to 25. Approximately 1,000 families with twins have participated.

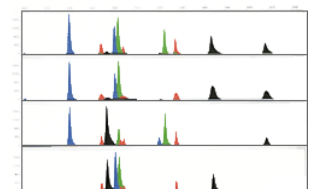
Family Study (FS) This group is composed of families who were living in Colorado at the time of their enrollment. We contacted families who had an adolescent in drug treatment, as well as matched 'control' families who lived in the same area and had a similar family structure. To date, over 3700 participants have been interviewed from this group. We are currently conducting follow-up interviews with these individuals and their families.

Colorado Adoption Project (CAP) Individuals in the Colorado Adoption Project have been participating with us since birth. The oldest individuals are now 31 years old. This study consists of families with adopted children as well as matched control families with a same age child who was not adopted.

Thank you to all of you who continue to participate in our research studies!

Recent Highlights: Funding, Publications & Results

Due to promising initial findings and the ability to re-contact willing participants, funding was recently extended through 2008.



Over 100 papers and chapters in books are in press or have been published using data from these studies. If you would like a copy of one of these papers, please contact us. You can find a complete list at <http://ibgwww.colorado.edu/cadd>.

We have conducted the first complete DNA scan for areas influencing substance dependence. Using data from this project, researchers at IBG were able to find several areas of interest on chromosomes 3 and 9. Further studies are underway on the relationship between these areas of DNA and substance abuse problems. The results may lead to new treatment strategies for alcoholism and drug addiction.



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Several research divisions at the University of Colorado are involved with these studies. These include the Institute for Behavioral Genetics, the Department of Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology, and the Division of Substance Dependence at the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center. Each department plays a unique and important role in the collection, analysis, and security of the data.

If you have any questions or comments about your participation, or about the general nature of our work, please call or email us at the addresses to the left. Also, you can visit our website for more in-depth information or to request a copy of any of our publications. **Thank you again** for your contribution to our understanding of genetics and behavior.

Frequently Asked Questions

How did you get our name and how did we get involved?

That depends on what specific study you or your family were originally enrolled in. Participants were located through birth records in some cases and through rehabilitation centers in others. Parents were contacted at the beginning of our studies through letters mailed to the home. We are now conducting follow up interviews with family members who have participated with us in the past, sometimes more than 5 years ago. As always, your participation is completely voluntary.

How long much longer will this study be going on?

This is difficult to say. Funding is a key component to any research study. This project will continue as long as research monies are available. We are currently funded through 2008.



How is my DNA used?

We collect DNA to compare genetic traits with the answers you give us on interviews and questionnaires. We are looking for regions of DNA that may influence behavior. Your DNA is used only for research purposes, is labeled by a numeric code, not your name, and is kept in a secure environment at IBG.

Can I get the results of the tests?

All of the results from your interviews and other data are kept strictly confidential and are not released to anyone, even in the event of a lawful subpoena. However, in some situations we can release your data to a clinical professional with your authorization. Please contact us if you have questions about releasing your personal data.

Can my cousins do an interview with you?

Not right now. Currently, we are only conducting interviews with immediate family members who have already participated in our studies. However, we are interested in contacting some immediate family members who may not have participated with us before.

What is the purpose of this study?

The main focus of our research is to study the genetic and environmental influences on drug, alcohol and behavioral problems in families. We interview families who have some of these problems as well as families who do not. This allows us to compare and contrast family environments and genetics. We hope to gain a greater understanding of the conditions that lead to substance abuse problems later in life. This may lead to new treatments that address substance and behavior problems before they impact individuals, families, and communities.
