Papers using WLS at PAA 2015

Thursday, April 30 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM Indigo Ballrooms A-H Level 2 *Poster*

Data Resource: The Wisconsin Longitudinal Study • Pamela Herd, Carol Roan, and Vicky Chang UW- Madison

For nearly sixty years, the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS) has followed Wisconsin's high school class of 1957. The WLS includes six waves of survey data on the 1957 class members and four waves of data on siblings of the class of 1957. Genetic data, a variety of administrative data, and the potential to link to Medicare and Social Security data are also available. Our poster will educate current and potential WLS data users on the content and availability of the WLS dataset. Visitors to the poster will also have the opportunity to ask questions directly to a WLS expert.

Friday, May 1 8:30 AM - 10:00 AM Aqua Salon AB Level 3

Session 110 *Social Disparities in Health*

Is Cognition a Fundamental Cause of Health Disparities? A Cohort Analysis of Smoking Initiation and Cessation • Pamela Herd, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Cognitive epidemiologists argue that IQ, rather than education, is a fundamental cause of health disparities. To test this claim, we utilize the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study to examine smoking behaviors in a cohort that came of age during the period between 1950 and 1960, when the medical evidence, which received significant media attention, demonstrated the link between smoking and cancer. Smoking is an excellent test because of its high impact on mortality, the lack of evidence on the predictive value of IQ, and becayse individual behaviors are a central mechanism through which cognition is expected to affect health. Preliminary analyses demonstrate that those with higher IQs were more likely to have started smoking than those with lower IQs, despite the evidence regarding the ill effects of smoking, while educational performance/attainment are strongly and negatively associated with starting smoking. Educational attainment/performance also drives the likelihood of quitting smoking by later life.

Friday, May 1 • 2:45 PM - 4:15 PM Aqua 313 Level 3

Session 175 *: Couple Dynamics and Relationships in Later Life*

Your Face Is Your Fortune: Does Adolescent Attractiveness Predict Marriage and Sexual Activity Later in Life? • Amelia Karraker, Iowa State University; Kamil Sicinski, University of Wisconsin-Madison; Donald Moynihan, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

A growing literature documents the importance of physical attractiveness in romantic, marital, and sexual relationships, but little is known about how attractiveness functions in intimate relationships in later life. We use over 50 years of data from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study to examine the connections between adolescent physical attractiveness and intimate relationships in later life. We find that adolescent attractiveness facilitates sexual activity by increasing the probability of having access to potential sexual partners, but attractiveness is not related to sexual activity among those with partners. In addition, we find some evidence of higher payoffs to attractiveness for women than men. These findings highlight the importance of relationship context and gender for later life sexual activity and begin to explicate the social pathways through which factors across the life course influence sexual activity in later life.

Saturday, May 2 10:45 AM - 12:15 PM Sapphire Ballroom P Level 4

Session 203: *Education and Health Inequalities*

Elite College Degree and Mental Health in Mid- and Retirement-Age • Sze Liu, Harvard University; Ichiro Kawachi, Harvard University; Maria Glymour, University of California, San Francisco and Harvard University.

This study examines the effect of having a degree from an elite college with a 2-step analysis technique: (1) coarsened exact matching (CEM) to create analytical weights; and (2) weighted linear regression on the matched datasets including continuous measures of parental income and HS rank. Analysis was stratified by parental income. Using data from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study (WLS), we matched for gender, 1957 residence, mother's education, father's occupation, HS type, HS college preparatory class, semesters of HS math (median split), IQ, and quartiles of HS rank. Our outcomes were general health status (SF-12MCS and SF-12PCS) and depression symptoms (CESD scores). Elite college was determined by Barron's rating of college selectivity. Among respondents with high parental income, elite college degree-holders had lower CESD and higher SF-12 MCS and PCS, indicating less depressive symptoms in mid- and retirement-age and better physical and mental health at retirement-age. No statistically significant differences were noted among respondents with low parental income.