



Center for the Demography of Health and Aging
University of Wisconsin-Madison
with support from the National Institute on Aging since 1991

Why the WLS is So Special

- The longest running cohort longitudinal study in the United States.
- The breadth and depth of the data
- SAMPLE RETENTION!!!!!!
- It's more generalizable than you'd think.
- A select sample can be a 'good' sample.
- ANY truly longitudinal study (from birth to death) will face these issues.

The “Happy Days” cohort



The “Happy Days” Cohort

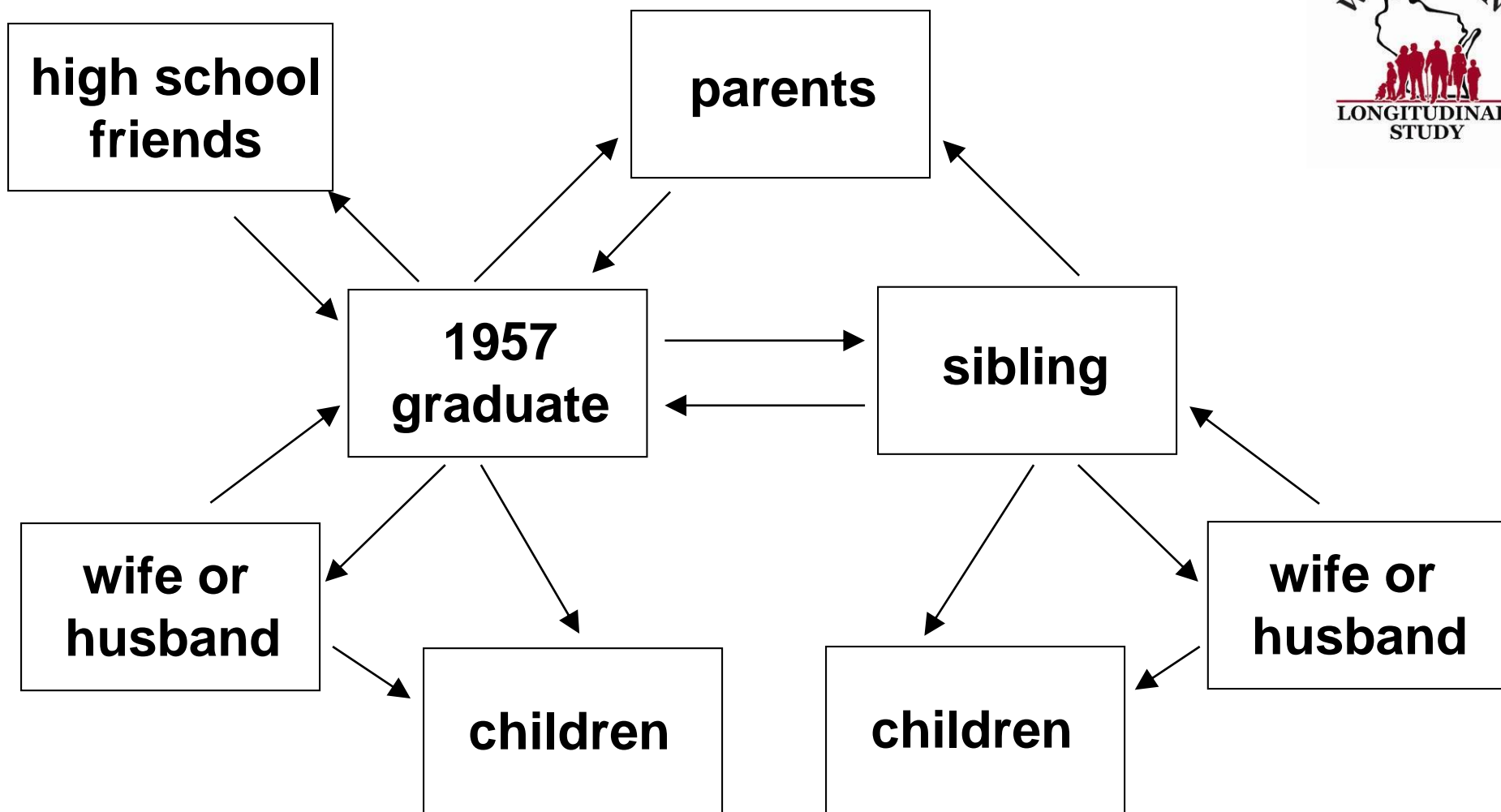


Sample Selection

- One Out of Three
- Original Sample Size = 10,317







relational structure of data in the WLS

Surveys

- 1957 (10,317)
- 1964 (short mail survey of parents, 87%)
- 1975 (telephone, 89% response rate)
- 1977 (2000 randomly selected siblings, telephone, 80%)
- 1992-4 (telephone/mail; 85%/80% response rates for graduates/siblings)
- 2004-6 (telephone/mail; 86%/89%)
- 2010 (in person and mail)

Data Domains: Education



- Complete Educational Attainment History (1957-2010)
- Classes in high school, perception of parents and teachers, aspirations, aspirations of friends (1957)
- Administrative data: Henmon Nelson IQ scores, Class rank, elementary through high school resources

Data Domains: Employment



- Employment aspirations (1957-1992)
- Jobs and job characteristics (1957-2010)
- Earnings (1975-2010)

Data Domains: Social

- Attractiveness, school activities (1957)
- Involvement with organizations (1975-2010)
- Time spent with family/friends and quality of relationships (1975-2010)
- Religious affiliation and participation (1975-2010)
- Caregiving (1992-2010)

Data Domains: Family

- Parental background (1957)
- Marriage plans (1957)
- Full marital history, marital quality, many details about spouse, including interviews in 2003 (1975-2010)
- Time spent with family (1975-2010)
- Children (1975-2010)
- Siblings (1975-2010)

Data Domains: Nonnormative

- Parents who lost a child early to death, have a child with a significant mental illness or a child with a developmental disability
- Special interviews 2004-2010

Data Domains: Income and Wealth

- Parent's occupations, income, and education (1957)
- Earnings, household and individual (1975-2010)
- Total income, household and individual (1992-2010)
- Full Assets (1992-2010)
- Intertransfers (1992-2010)
- Financial Literacy measure and Economic Games of which a subset of cases play for real-stakes (2010)
- Social Security records are coming

Data Domains: Cognition

- Henmon Nelson, grad and sibling (1957)
- Cognition(1992-2010)
- Subset given additional cognition measures
 - ▣ E-Prime ACASI
 - Single word reading
 - Word recognition
 - Picture naming
 - Category verification
 - ▣ Cookie Theft



Data Domains: Mental Health

- Personality (1992-2010)
- Psychological well-being (1992-2010)
- CESD (1992-2010)
- We know if child has significant mental health issues



Data Domains: Physical Health

- General health, Chronic conditions (1992-2010)
- Health Utilities Index (2004-2010)
- Health insurance (1992-2010)
- Medical use/costs (1992-2010)
- Smoking, Drinking (1992-2010), Obesity (1957, 1992-2010)
- Retrospective childhood health (2004)
- Medicare Records/Tumor Registry



How heavy is this person? ---->

Click the point on the scale that best represents how heavy you think she is.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin border, intended for the user to click a point on the scale above.

Data Domains: Physical Health (2010)

- Physical Functioning
 - ▣ Grip Strength, Timed Gait test, Chair Rise, Peak Flow measure
- Anthropometric measures
 - ▣ Height, Weight, Waist and Hip circumference
 - ▣ Photograph
- Health Literacy
 - ▣ STOFHLA
 - ▣ Newest Vital Sign (NVS)
- Visions Screeners
- Medication Inventory

Data Domains: Physical Health



- DNA from spit samples

Health

- Volunteer, it's good for your health! But do it for the 'right' reasons.
- Why men don't go to the doctor.
- Who's prepared for end of life.

Other Endeavors

- Networks
- Survivors of Deceased

Genetics: WLS Basics

- 5500 samples
- Will have another 3500 samples.
- What we have currently genotyped.
 - ▣ 96 SNPs
- Quality Control
 - ▣ Sibling gene frequencies in line
 - ▣ 2 labs did some of the assaying (K Bioscience in the UK and Atwood Lab at Wisconsin)

Genetics: WLS Advantages

- Large sample
- Sibling sample
- Homogenous sample
- Full commitment to data sharing
- Rich contextual data
 - ▣ Full life course data
 - ▣ Unique measures of cognition
 - ▣ Rich contextual data
 - ▣ Unique mix of psychological and social measures

Genetics: WLS Empirical Work and Plans

- Studies looking at cognition, obesity, depression, Fragile X (FMR1), (Taq1 a) partisanship, smoking, and alcohol use.
- Potential for GxE Analyses
- Potential for GWAS analyses

Telling the Story of Wisconsin's Class of 1957




372047 - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Refresh Home Search Favorites Media Mail Print Camera - Yellow Recycle Bin

Address <http://www.ssc.wisc.edu/cgi-bin/smeland/obsampleboy.cgi> Go Links >>


Google Search Web 18 blocked AutoFill Options



Not At All Heavy ————— Extremely Heavy

How heavy is this person? ---->

Click the point on the scale that best represents how heavy you think he is.



Done Internet

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Why Longitudinal Data Matters

- We can better understand what shapes peoples' lives (their employment, their families, their health) all the way across the life course.
- In short, things that happen when we're children can have profound impacts on the rest of our lives.
- “What are the things you need to do early on to give people happy, healthy, and long lives?”

Data Domains



social/family

physical/mental health

educational history

mortality

employment history

income and wealth

job characteristics

retirement and pensions

marital history

cognitive performance

children (non-normative)