The HFSC: A Light Refresher:
The Hawai‘i Family Study of Cognition (HFSC) was a large-scale study of over 6,500 people from over 1,800 families living on the island of O‘ahu, Hawai‘i from 1972-1976. The principal objective of the HFSC was to assess genetic and environmental bases of performance on various tests of cognitive abilities. These data are unique in a number of respects, including (a) the measurement of a broad and comprehensive cognitive battery of tests, (b) the large number of minority Americans measured, (c) the organization of data by nuclear families, (d) the ancillary collection of demographic, personality, and social information, and (e) several re-testings of selected individuals during the past 30 years. HFSC cognition and personality data have been used in over 45 scientific publications dating from 1972 to 1995. During the past two years (2010 -2012) we have been able to recover, computerize, and use the classical database collated from sources provided by the original investigators as well as demonstrate feasibility of tracking/tracing, re-contacting, and retesting (a selected group of) original participants from the HFSC after 30-40 years.

Starting the Recontact with the HFSC Cohort…
In 2010, we initiated a revival of the HFSC by re-contacting original participants to determine whether they would be interested in participating in a follow-up study. We received a positive response indicating interest in a follow-up study. Some families later participated in a pilot study using the internet to give web surveys and cognitive tests.

Can we use the Internet for Retesting?
Based on the responses from the re-contact phase, a large majority (~80-84%) of respondents indicated access and regular use of the internet. The short battery of tests developed was piloted for feasibility of an online internet-based testing methodology for longitudinal assessment of cognitive measures, as well as sociodemographic and health outcomes for family members from multiple generations and diverse ethnicities. For this pilot phase of the measurement research, testing included a sample of multigenerational families. These new assessments provided information about the feasibility of online assessment for a large scale follow-up study, as well as for studying intergenerational transmission of cognition and general health in aging.
Interviewing HFSC Parents & Children on Cognitive Status and Health-Related Quality of Life

We recently conducted a follow-up pilot study in 2013-2014, where (now adult) HFSC children and parents were interviewed over the phone to assess health-related quality of life and cognitive status and functioning. These data are being analyzed to provide information on how future studies may be developed to better understand aging, cognitive functioning, and health-related quality of life.

Our Ethnocultural Diversity: is it a factor in healthcare utilization, family decision-making, and caregiving of our aging parents?

In 2014, we conducted a study to survey a random sample of families about ethnocultural and family factors related to aging parents’ healthcare utilization and decision making, and caregiving expectations. Preliminary results showed the most significant differences in healthcare utilization and the caregiving outcomes were by parents’ mental health condition. Females also reported greater caregiver strain than males. There were also some differences in caregiving expectations by ethnicity. We are also currently examining more detailed responses that may further explain some of these differences.

Our Current Study: Assessing and Improving Cognitive Measures in the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) – A Collaboration with the University of Southern California (USC)

In partnership with the University of Southern California, the HFSC will be participating in a study aimed at improving the cognitive measures given in the national Health and Retirement Study. The HFSC is included as an important longitudinal sample of ethnically diverse families. This study includes a short battery of cognitive assessments administered over the internet.

Publications:

Congratulations on the following recent publications:
