

Speed Talk: Addiction Research Using the NLSY79

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Data We Generate

- NLSY79 in 24th wave for original sample born 1957-64; N=7000+; 115K variables in omnibus social science survey
- Drug use supplements in 1984, 88, 92, 94, 98
- Alcohol use supplements in 1982-85, 88,89, 94 & 2002.
- Children of females assessed every other year since 1986
- Their own drug & alcohol use + extensive family background data linked to maternal data
- A 2 generation study
- Large, complex data sets available over the Web

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Discoveries: Supply and Demand

- Supply side-
 - Relationship of substance use to wide variety of socio-economic, demographic and environmental factors
 - Includes large health supplements at 40, 50 and cognition at 49
 - Large samples, long-running project
 - Intergenerational design with on-going data collection
- Demand
 - What is the best way to track hard drug usage among older adults?
 - Are there ways of diagnosing long-term brain damage via self-administered tests rather than expensive scans or complex diagnostic tests?
 - Are there drug seizure and/or price data available by geographic area we can merge into the data?
 - How to facilitate gene x environment studies

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How We Relate to Others

- Our public use data are available to all on an equal basis over the Web
- People with good ideas for data collection are encouraged to send us their ideas
- Working toward integrating traditional social science approach to addiction research with genomic approach
- All systems built around relational databases – looking for ways to pipeline our data into NIF
- A lot of variation in which parts of the problem different groups have relative strengths
- We have spent 20 years generating powerful systems for survey data collection, documentation & dissemination – these tools may spill over to others & other applications – if we knew who they are!

Making Progress

- Our biggest obstacle is awareness by users; NIF may fulfill that role
- We attend a variety of social science professional meetings to introduce the data to potential users, but smaller, focused user groups are a bit of a problem
- Harmonization is important to us; we have long histories so stability enables comparisons over time. BUT – we want our data to keep up to date and including harmonized elements enables a cross-walk.

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