

**COMPARISON OF FAMILY INTERACTIONS
ACROSS FAMILIES
WITH
DOMESTICALLY ADOPTED CHILDREN,
INTERNATIONALLY ADOPTED CHILDREN, &
BIOLOGICAL CHILDREN**

Martha Rueter and Ascan Koerner

University of Minnesota
St. Paul, MN, USA

Sibling Interaction and Behavior Study (SIBS)

Minnesota Twins and Family Research Center (MTFRC)

Matt McGue (PI)
Bill Iacono
Kevin Haroian
Anu Sharma
Martha Rueter

University of Minnesota

Sibling Interaction and Behavior Study (SIBS)

Study design:

- 200 families with 2 adopted adolescents
- 200 families with 2 non-adopted adolescents
- 200 families with 1 adopted and 1 non-adopted adolescent

Study focus:

Understand family, especially sibling, influences on adolescent adjustment.

Understanding family influences . . .

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    graph LR
      A([Family Characteristics]) --> B([Adolescent Adjustment])
  
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Understanding family influences . . .

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    graph LR
      A([Family Characteristics]) --> B([Adolescent Adjustment])
  
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Bimmel et al., 2003;
Juffer & van IJzendoorn, 2005;
Lee, 2003;
O'Brien & Zamosny, 2003;
van IJzendoorn et al., 2005

Understanding adoptive family influences . . .

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    graph LR
      A([Family Interactions]) --> B([Adoptive Adolescent Adjustment])
  
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*Family interactions often play a key role
in theories explaining children's adjustment.*

What we know about adoptive family interactions . . .

- Behavior genetics studies.
- Studies using self-report measures.
- Studies measuring relationship quality and satisfaction.

(. . . *not a lot.*)

Family interactions often play a key role

What is the role of family interactions in explaining adoptive children's adjustment?

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First step: Describe adoptive family interactions.

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Describe mean level differences in family interactions across adoptive and non-adoptive families.

Families with

- domestically adopted children
- internationally adopted children
- non-adopted children

First step: Describe adoptive family interactions.

Families interactions:

- Parent-child conflict
- Warmth, support
- Family communication
- Parental control

Sibling Interaction and Behavior Study (SIBS)

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N = 470 (617 families in full study)

- 201 families with 2 internationally adopted children (36.8% boys)
- 61 families with 2 domestically adopted children (58.2% boys)
- 208 families with 2 biological children (48.6% boys)

All adopted children placed before age 2 years (M = 4.7 months)

Children's age range = 13 – 21 years
(Elder child M age = 16 years, younger child M age = 14 years)

All families interviewed at the MTFRC labs at the University of Minnesota.

First step: Describe adoptive family interactions.

Families interactions:

- Parent-child conflict
- Warmth, support
- Family communication
- Parental control

Family interactions: Definitions

Parent-child conflict

Angry, critical, argumentative or rejecting behavior.

Warmth, support

Expressions of affection, concern, support or encouragement.

Family communication

Discussions that verbally convey information, points of view, needs.

Parental control

Parental influence and control over family activities, interactions and perspectives.

Information Sources:

Survey:

- Mother report of self, father, and children
- Father report of self, mother, and children
- Elder child report of self and parents
- Younger child report of self and parents

Trained Observer:

- Mother behavior to other family members
- Father behavior to other family members
- Elder child behavior to other family members
- Younger child behavior to other family members

Family interactions: Observer Report

Globally rated using The SIBS Rating Scales, In-lab structured tasks.

Parent-child conflict (1 scale, 4 family members rated)

Angry, critical, rejecting or contemptuous verbal and nonverbal behavior toward one another.

Family interactions: Survey Report

Independently completed paper-pencil surveys

Parent-child conflict (12 questions)

- I often criticize my child/parent.
- I often irritate my child/parent.
- My child/parent and I often get into arguments.

Family interactions: Observer Report

Warmth, support (1 scale, 4 family members rated)

Verbal and nonverbal expressions of caring, concern, support, or encouragement.

Family interactions: Survey Report

Warmth, support (12 questions)

- I love my child/parent no matter what.
- I am proud of my child/parent.
- I really like my child/parent.

Family interactions: Observer Report

Communication (1 scale, 4 family members rated)

Verbally expressing views, needs, wants, etc. in a clear, appropriate, and reasonable manner.

Family interactions: Survey Report

Communication (8 questions)

- I talk about concerns and experiences with my child/parent.
- My child/Parent and I don't have much to talk about.
- I prefer not to talk about personal problems.

Family interactions: Observer Report

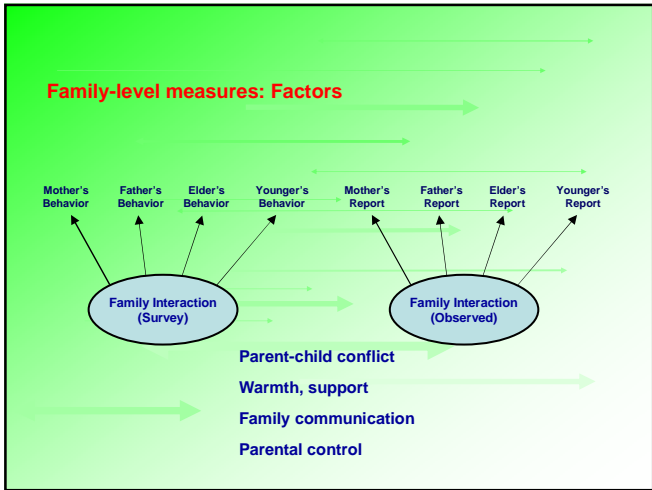
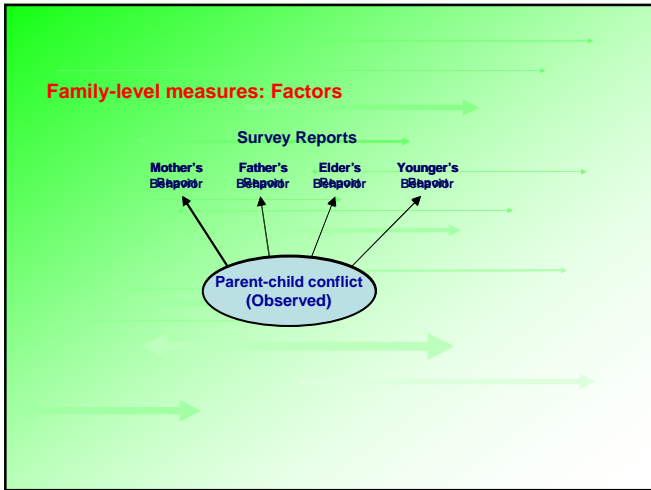
Control (1 scale, 4 family members rated)
Verbally expressing views, needs, wants, etc. in a clear, appropriate, and reasonable manner.

Family interactions: Survey Report

Control (5 questions)
(Parent): I make it clear what I want my child to do.
(Child): My parent makes it clear what he/she wants me to do.
(Parent): When I give my child a job, I expect him/her to finish it.
(Child): When I am given a job, my parent expects me to finish it.

Family Interactions x Information Sources

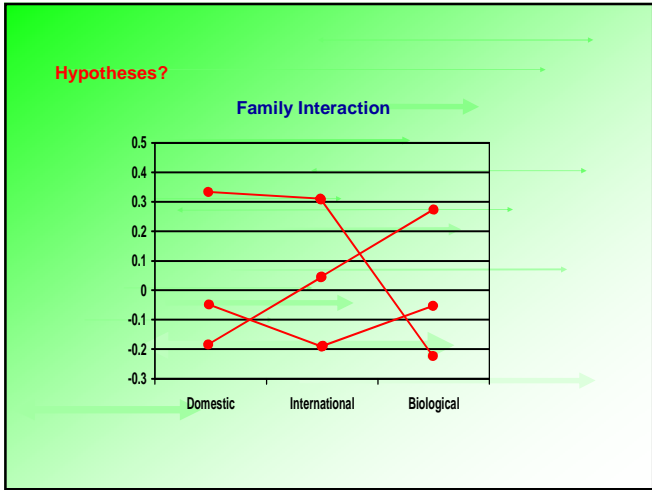
Family Interactions	Parent-child conflict	Information Sources	Mother report	Father report	Elder report	Younger child report	Trained Observer
	Warmth, support		Mother report	Father report	Elder report	Younger child report	Trained Observer
Information Sources	Family communication	Information Sources	Mother report	Father report	Elder report	Younger child report	Trained Observer
	Parental control		Mother report	Father report	Elder report	Younger child report	Trained Observer

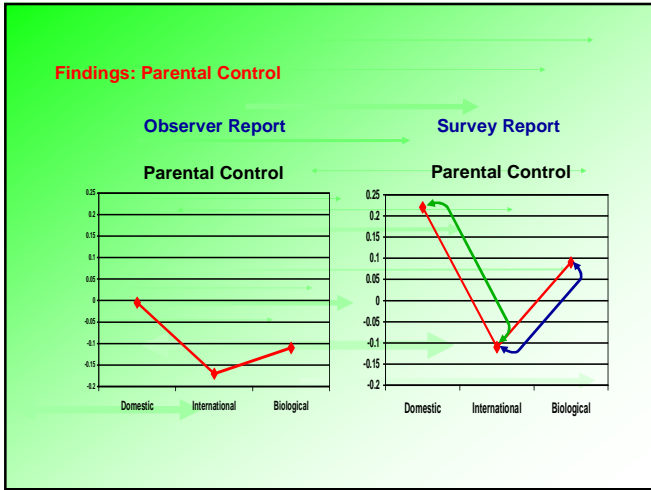
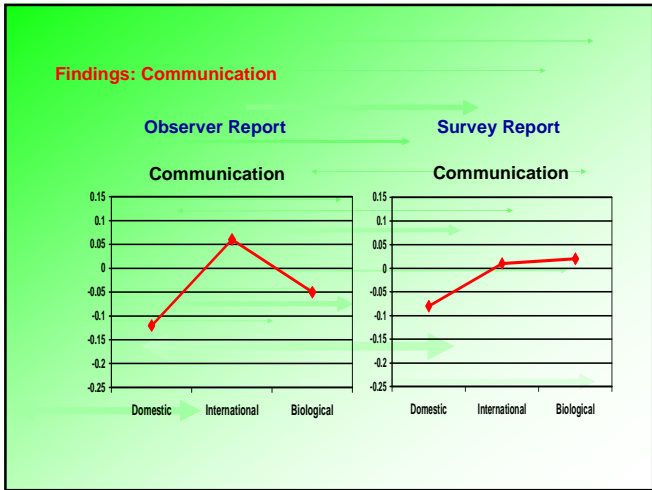
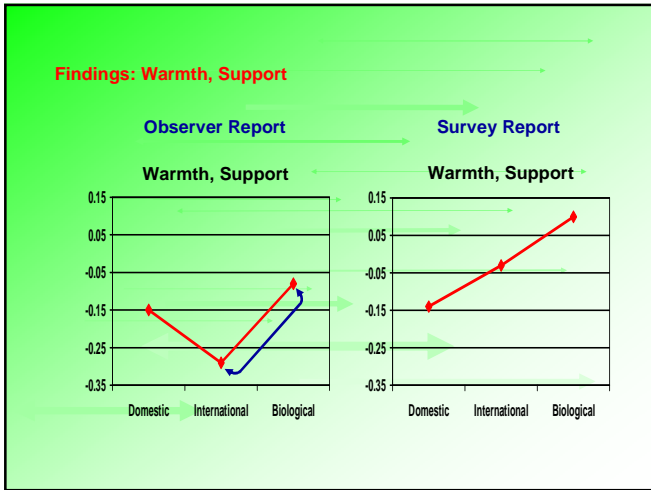
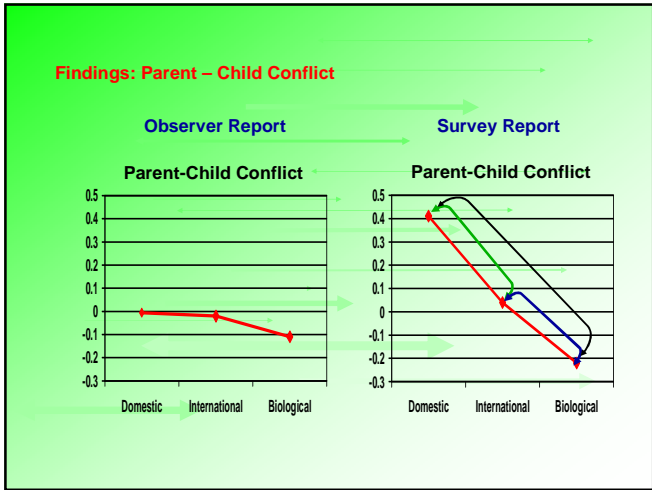
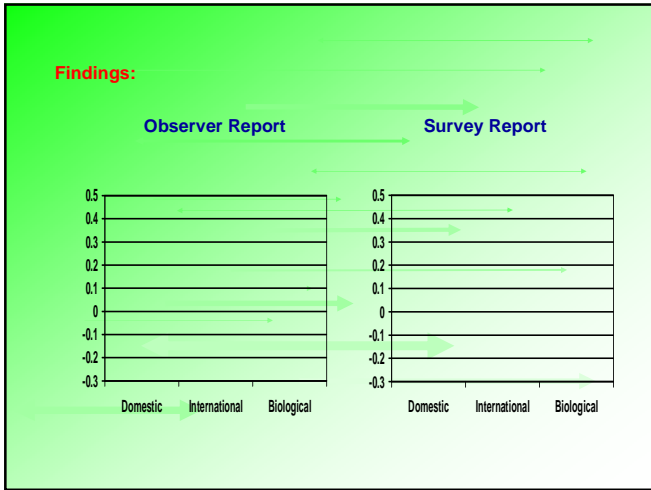


Mean level differences
in survey and observer reports of family interactions.

across families with

- domestically adopted children
- internationally adopted children
- biological children





Overall Results:

Independent Observer:
No differences in family interactions across adoptive and non-adoptive families

Family Member Reports:

- Families with domestically adopted children:
Highest conflict, Highest parental control.
- Families with internationally adopted children:
Moderate conflict, Lowest parental control
- Families with non-adopted (biological) children:
Lowest conflict, Moderate parental control.

Possible Explanations:

Methodological

Observed vs. survey measures capturing different qualities of interaction.
Observation tasks not providing full picture of family interactions.

Spurious Result

More boys in domestically adoptive families.

Perceptual Differences

Adoptive family members "see" their families differently than non-adoptive family members.

Certain adoptive family members "see" their families differently than non-adoptive family members.

Future Directions:

Methodological

Observed vs. survey measures capturing different qualities of interaction.
Observation tasks not providing full picture of family interactions.

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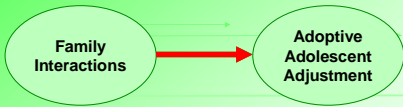
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Future Directions:



Family interactions often play a key role in explaining children's adjustment.

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