

A quarterly report on activities and events at the National Opinion Research Center.

New Initiatives



The National Children's Study

The National Children's Study (NCS) is the largest and most comprehensive long-term study of children's health and development ever attempted in the United States. It will track the health status of 100,000

children from before birth through age 21.

The study has the potential to support breakthrough research on the factors affecting child health, including genetics and a wide range of environmental influences. From its initiation and for decades to follow, the NCS will provide health researchers and practitioners with powerful resources for understanding the etiology of childhood illness and the possibilities for developing interventions to prevent them.

In addition to the NCS work already underway at the University of Wisconsin's Vanguard Center, NORC will play an important part in five of the 22 National Children's Study Centers. Work will vary from center to center and may include some or all of the following tasks:

- Data collection coordination
- Listing
- Household screening
- Participant enrollment
- In-person and telephone interviewing
- Bio-specimen and environmental sampling
- Clinic/hospital-based data collection
- Technical consultation on sampling design

The five study centers in which NORC will play a role:

Greater Chicago National Children's Study Center
University of Massachusetts
University of Pittsburgh
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP)
University of Minnesota

For more information on NORC's role in the National Children's Study, contact Angela DeBello at debello-angela@norc.org or 312-759-4069.

The Dynamics of Methamphetamine Markets

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) has awarded a grant to NORC's Substance Abuse, Mental Health, and Criminal Justice Systems Department to conduct a project called The Dynamics of Methamphetamine Markets. The study will examine the organization and operation of illicit retail methamphetamine markets in three stages:

- A survey of 18,000 police departments in cities nationwide to obtain basic information on local markets;
- Telephone interviews with narcotics police in 75 cities to gain more detailed information;
- Process studies of meth markets in nine cities or counties using focus groups, in-depth interviews, and systematic observation to learn how the markets operate at different levels.

Henry Brownstein is the principal investigator. Contact him at (202) 429-1953 or brownstein-henry@norc.org.

Evaluation of Thai Financial Systems

Professor Robert Townsend continues his long-running work on financial systems in Asia. With the support of the National Science Foundation, Professor Townsend's new project will examine the relationship of financial institutions, financial markets, and government financial sector policy to growth, inequality, and poverty reduction.

Although focused on Thailand, the project has implications for other emerging market economies within and outside of Asia. NORC will provide administrative support for this project. Contact Kathleen Parks in the Academic Research Centers at 773-256-6302 or parks-kathleen@norc.org.

Synthetic Beta File Evaluation

The Census Bureau has asked NORC to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a new product that combines micro data from the Internal Revenue Service, the Survey of Income Participation, and the Social Security Administration to present a clearer picture of individual program participation. The project contact is Julia Lane. Reach her at lane-julia@norc.uchicago.edu, (312) 325-2584, or (202) 887-2337.

National Study of Child Care Supply and Demand

This work will inform the implementation of a proposed national study to be conducted between 2009 and 2012. Elements of the design effort will include convening an expert panel for consultation, developing sampling and methodological plans, cognitive testing of measures and survey items, developing survey instruments, developing an analysis plan, and estimating the resources a national study would require. The effort will include a special focus on low-income households with children through age 13 whose parents are working and receiving cash assistance, are transitioning off cash assistance, or are at risk of needing cash assistance, and on child care and early education programs and providers serving them.

For this effort, NORC is teamed with the Chapin Hall Center for Children at the University of Chicago and Child Trends and with expert consultants from Columbia University, Oregon State University, the University of Texas, Wellesley College, and other organizations. Rupa Datta led the proposal effort and is the project director. The co-principal investigators are Robert Goerge of Chapin Hall and economist Ann Witte of Wellesley.

Contact the project director, Rupa Datta, at (510) 647-3660 or by email at datta-rupa@norc.org.

Ongoing Projects

Survey of Earned Doctorates

Senior Vice President for Education and Child Development, Harrison N. Greene, announced in October that NORC has been selected by the National Science Foundation (NSF) to conduct the [Survey of Earned Doctorates](#) (SED) for the next six years. NORC has conducted this important survey for the NSF and five other federal agencies since 1997.

The survey allows the nation and its policy makers to see long-term trends in the numbers and fields of study of new research doctorate recipients. The survey gathers information annually from all new U.S. research doctorate graduates (more than 45,000 in 2006) about their educational histories, funding sources, and post-doctoral plans.

The SED employs a range of data collection modes -- paper survey, Web, write-on PDF, and critical-item phone completion -- that facilitate NORC achieving annual survey response rates of at least 91 percent.

Mary Hess, a senior survey director at NORC and the lead project manager of the SED since 2002, will direct the project under the new contract. She can be reached at 312-759-4029 or hess-mary@norc.org.



National Social Life, Health and Aging Program

The first findings from the National Social Life, Health and Aging Program (NSHAP) were released in late August in the form of a scholarly paper published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*. The paper's authors are Stacy Lindau Tessler, Linda J. Waite, and Edward O. Laumann, all of the University of Chicago. Laumann is also the chairman of NORC's Board of Trustees.

The study of older Americans, ages 57 to 85, is the first comprehensive, nationally representative study about older adult sexuality and its association with health. The survey achieved an impressive 75.5% response rate from a scientifically drawn sample of 3,005 adults.

Among the many significant findings:

- Americans remain sexually active well into their 70s and 80s.
- Health status was more important than age in predicting sexual activity.

- Few older Americans talk to their doctors about sexual problems; women talk to their doctors about them less often than men.
- Some sexual problems, such as erectile dysfunction, are correlated with Diabetes.

NORC played an important part in the study, training more than 130 field interviewers without prior medical training to collect survey data, and biomarkers (physical samples such as saliva and vaginal swabs) and biomeasures such as height, weight, and waist size.

The press conference held to announce the findings received national coverage, resulting in citations and news stories in the *New York Times*, Reuters, Associated Press, the *Los Angeles Times*, and many other news outlets. To learn more, visit the NORC [NSHAP project page](#), read the [press release](#), and view the [report](#) on the University of Chicago News Office site.

People

Struyk Joins NORC's International Projects Dept.



Raymond J. Struyk has joined the International Projects department of NORC as a senior fellow. He previously was chief-of-party for the USAID-financed Egypt Financial Services Project and he has held several positions at the Urban Institute, including senior fellow. Struyk also served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for

Evaluation and Research at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) from 1977 to 1979.

Struyk has led major projects fostering independent think tanks in countries undergoing economic transition, including the establishment of the Institute for Urban Economics, a Moscow think tank still operating today.

His other primary expertise is in housing policy and reform. As director of USAID's Shelter Sector Reform Program of technical assistance to the Russian Federation, he was involved in the design and implementation of Russia's housing allowance program, the country's first means-tested program. Most recently, he served as resident director of the large Egypt Financial Services project to develop the country's mortgage sector. Contact Ray at (202) 223-2306 or struyk-ray@norc.org.

Evelyn M. Kitagawa, NORC Life Trustee, Dies at Age 87.



Evelyn M. Kitagawa, University of Chicago sociologist and NORC Life Trustee died at the age of 87 on Saturday, September 15, 2007.

Kitagawa is remembered for her work on a large-scale NIH study on the causes of death for 500,000 Americans who died in 1960. She found that there were large differences in death rates according to income and education. She also pioneered research on fertility, cohabitation, and out-of-wedlock childbearing.

Copeland Named Statistics and Methodology Associate Director

Early this summer, Kennan "Ken" Copeland joined NORC as Associate Director of the Statistics and Methodology Department. He is a PhD statistician with extensive credentials and experience in survey design, sampling and statistical modeling. He previously worked at a major pharmaceutical market research company and at the Bureau of Labor Statistics and the Census Bureau. Ken can be reached at (202) 223-6139 or copeland-kennan@norc.org.

Bowie Adds Expertise in Demographic Surveys

Chester "Chet" Bowie joined NORC in early October as senior vice president for strategic development. As director of the U.S. Census Bureau's Demographic Surveys Division, Chet was responsible for managing the client



relationships for many of these surveys. He brings extraordinarily relevant expertise and contacts. He also will work with Julia Lane and the staff of the Economics, Labor and Population Studies department. Chet can be reached at (202) 887-2356 or bowie-chet@norc.org.

Historic Gathering of NORC Academic Directors

On the evening of October 19, 2007, four former academic directors of NORC were honored at a reception held at NORC's 55 East Monroe offices. The photograph below documents the unveiling of a wall display dedicated to the academic directors who served from NORC's founding in 1941 until 1992 when the top position was changed to president and given more of a business focus.



From left: Norman Bradburn, Kenneth Prewitt, Robert Michael, and James Davis.

Publications

The Other African Americans: Contemporary African and Caribbean Immigrants in the U.S.



NORC Research Scientist Yoku Shaw-Taylor and co-editor Stephen Tuch of Georgetown University recently edited *The Other African Americans: Contemporary African and Caribbean Immigrants in the United States*, published by Rowman & Littlefield.

Data Quality and Record Linkage Techniques



Fritz Scheuren, NORC Vice President and former President of the American Statistical Association, along with co-authors Thomas Herzog and William Winkler, authored a new volume, *Data Quality and Record Linkage Techniques*, published by

Springer Publishing Company. The guide offers practical advice as well as methods and modes for improving data quality.

Small-Group and Individual Health Insurance in California More Costly



June 14, 2007 -- The website of the refereed journal *Health Affairs* published the results of a study on health insurance in California by NORC senior fellow Jon Gabel and coauthors. The study, supported by the California Healthcare Foundation,

found that premiums for small-group coverage in the state increased 53 percent between 2003 and 2006. The paper is available on the *Health Affairs* [website](#).

Events

NORC Hosts State Health Care Reform Conference

On October 15, 2007, NORC sponsored a small, but important conference to discuss the data and information that are available and needed for state health care reform efforts. Much of the dialogue around state health care reform has focused on target populations, benefit design, and the structure of financing. However the types of data and information states need to assess different reform options and make informed decisions has been less studied.

The conference, moderated by NORC Trustee Gail Wilensky and hosted by the Kaiser Family Foundation, brought together a select group of about 20 panelists—including high-level state health care public policymakers and other decision-makers; state and national funding organizations, and executives from key federal agencies, including the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the National Center for Health Statistics, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Census Bureau, the Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation.

In addition, a number of experts attended, including NORC Co-Directors of the Health Policy & Evaluation department, Marc Berk and Claudia Schur, and Senior Fellows Michael O'Grady, Jon Gabel, and Jack Feldman.

Discussion at the conference focused on:

- data resources and methods for estimating the number and characteristics of the uninsured in each state
- Medicaid reform
- the availability of employer-sponsored insurance
- local opinion regarding different approaches to reform.

The one-day conference succeeded in creating a dialogue between those who fund research, those who produce it, and the state officials who use this research to ultimately make key policy decisions. Drawing on the discussions that took place and through continued communication with participants, NORC will develop briefs and other resource materials to help address states' most pressing data needs for health care reform.

NORC in the News

Selected coverage of NORC projects and staff in the popular press. To subscribe to the weekly news email, contact: savage-cathleen@norc.org

First Findings from Study of Older Americans' Sexuality and Health Garner National Attention

The National Social Life, Health and Aging Project (NSHAP) released its first findings this week, with a press conference on Monday and a scholarly paper published in the August 23, 2007 [New England Journal of Medicine](#). The findings about sexual activity and health in older American adults garnered front page coverage in

[USA Today](#), the [New York Times](#), and the [Chicago Tribune](#), and prominent coverage in the [Washington Post](#), [CNN](#), the [Los Angeles Times](#), Canada's [Globe and Mail](#), NBC's [Today Show](#) and [NBC Nightly News](#), [MSN](#), [FoxNews](#), [WebMD](#), and [MediLexicon](#). A story by the Associated Press (AP) was syndicated widely, including by [NPR](#), [CBS News](#), [ABC News](#), [MSNBC](#), the [San Diego Union Tribune](#), and Canada's [C-Health](#). [Reuters](#) also published a syndicated story.

To learn more, view the official [press release](#) on the University of Chicago News Office site, read the [paper](#), and visit the [project page](#).



Health Premiums Rise Faster than Wages (6.1 percent in 2006)

September 11, 2007 -- The 2007 [Survey of Employer Health Benefits](#), released by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the Health Research & Educational Trust, found that premiums rose 6.1 percent in 2007, faster than the rate of inflation. The study's findings were also published in the journal *Health Affairs*.

NONORC Senior Fellow [Jon Gabel](#), co-author of the report, was quoted widely in the national press about the report. Heidi Whitmore, NORC research scientist, also contributed to the report. Read the official [press release](#) and download the [full survey](#).

Gabel was quoted in an original story by [Reuters](#) news service that was published by many other news outlets. The [San Francisco Chronicle](#), the [Minneapolis Star Tribune](#), the [Hartford Courant](#), and [Business Insurance](#) also published original stories about the study's findings on September 12, 2007. In one story, Gabel noted that "We are not falling off of a cliff, but we are witnessing a slow but certain long-term erosion of our employer-based system." In another, Gabel pointed out that the average annual cost of family health care coverage is now roughly equal to the annual income of a worker earning the new federal minimum wage of \$5.85.

Happy Workers Won't Stray

[Forbes Magazine](#) writer Lisa LaMotta noted in a July 27, 2007 column that workers stay longer at large firms and that tenure at small firms is growing. The information comes from the [National Longitudinal Survey of Youth](#) and a special analysis of the data by the Office of Advocacy of the U.S. Small Business Administration. The data also show that firms that offer health benefits retain workers longer than those that do not.

Low Income Families Pay More

The [Lexington Herald-Leader](#) quoted Jane Walsh of the Annie E. Casey Foundation's Making Connections Louisville project in a June 19, 2007 story. The reporter explored how low-income families pay more for just about everything from mortgages to food and medical care. Walsh was asked about banking practices and payday loans.

NORC works with the Urban Institute and the Annie E. Casey Foundation to survey participants in the [Making Connections](#) projects in 10 cities nationwide. Making Connections is 10-year project designed to improve conditions in inner-city neighborhoods.

Most Women in Humanities Not on Tenure Track

Norman M. Bradburn, NORC senior fellow and former director of NORC, was interviewed by the [Chronicle of Higher Education](#) (subscription required) for a May 7, 2007 article about the initial findings of the [Humanities Indicators Project](#). The project is a long-term data collection effort led by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and is supported by a grant from the Mellon Foundation. Bradburn is the project's principal investigator.

Some surprising initial findings show that, while women are well represented in the humanities, most are not on the tenure track and that the percentage of tenure-track positions held by women in the humanities has dropped since the early 1990s. Bradburn presented these and other findings on May 10 in Montreal at the American Council of Learned Societies annual meeting.

Crime Clean-Up No Simple Matter

The [Baltimore Sun](#) quoted Henry Brownstein, director of NORC's [Substance Abuse, Mental Health and Criminal Justice](#) department, on May 10, 2007 about the continuing crime problem in Baltimore and elsewhere. Brownstein noted the need for a comprehensive solution as opposed to simply increasing police presence and arrests.

Best and Worst Jobs

April 22, 2007 -- The release of "Job Satisfaction in the United States," a NORC report by Tom W. Smith that examined data from the 2006 and earlier [General Social Surveys](#), got additional coverage this week in a wide variety of news outlets: The [Chicago Tribune](#), the [Toronto Star](#), the [Houston Chronicle](#), [The Collegian](#), [Salt Lake City Weekly](#), [KSL-TV](#), an editorial in the California-based Daily Breeze.com, the Honolulu Advertiser, and All Headline News. Read the [report](#) and see the [press release](#). The report cited clergy and other jobs that help people as the most satisfying and jobs like waitress, retail sales clerk, and unskilled laborer as the least satisfying.

Racial and Ethnic Divisions Limit Support for Government Spending Programs

An April 29, 2007 [New York Times](#) article by financial and economic reporter Eduardo Porter, cited the [General Social Survey](#) as a source of information. The article puts forward the opinions of several social science researchers, including Erzo F.P. Luttmer, associate professor at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard, who posited in a 2001 study that the percentage of people who say they support welfare spending decreases as the share of local recipients from their own racial group falls.

NORC Update is published quarterly by NORC at the University of Chicago, headquartered at 1155 E. 60th Street, Chicago, IL 60037. ISSN 1937-2469

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