

TWINS EARLY DEVELOPMENT STUDY NEWSLETTER 2024



Director of TEDS,
Professor Thalia Eley,
discusses the current
TEDS Mental Health Study
and exciting future plans



Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who completed the mental health survey – we know it was quite long. We are using your responses to understand what factors make young adults more susceptible to anxiety and depression, as well as what helps them handle stress better. We are also looking into who seeks and receives treatment for mental health issues, and among those who do, who shows improvement. These analyses, along with our focus groups, are guiding our future research. If you have any ideas for areas we should explore, please let us know.



TEDS Twins Linkage

Many of you have now received information about the medical record linkage work. For those whose addresses we are confident about, we've already sent out details. If we're unsure about your address, we'll be reaching out through the address held by your GP. We've kept track of everyone who has opted out, and we're now starting to figure out how to access medical record data. We will use this information to further explore experiences related to anxiety and depression in young adults and will combine it with the information you and your parents have provided over the past 30 years.

Even if we haven't heard from you in a while, we still class you as a TEDS participant. We still hold your data and hope you will join us for our next wave of data collection! To support our linkage work, TEDS has joined the UK Longitudinal Linkage Collaboration. This initiative brings together de-identified data from longitudinal studies and NHS electronic health records in a highly secure Trusted Research Environment. Accredited researchers can apply to use this data. You can find out more via this QR code on the right.

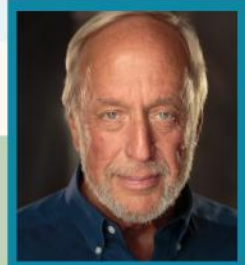


Please get in touch if you have questions about medical record linkage or would like to opt-out.



TEDS TWINS TURN 30!

A message from the founder
- Professor Robert Plomin



This year, the eldest twins in TEDS turn 30! A feature of developmental psychology is that you grow up with the participants in your study, almost the way parents grow up with their children. That's very much the feeling I have as I think about the three decades in which you have contributed to TEDS, making it such a successful enterprise. We began TEDS in 1994 when I came to the UK from the US, using birth records to identify the 21,000 pairs of twins born in England and Wales in 1994-6. More than 16,000 families agreed to join TEDS, in part to help science but also because everyone knows that twins are special.

Thanks to your continued generous participation, TEDS has been at the forefront of research to understand genetic and environmental influences on cognitive and language development in the preschool years, as well as school performance (including some of the earliest online cognitive assessments), and adjustment to the novel demands of the early adult years. TEDS has also been at the cutting edge of the DNA revolution after we collected your samples beginning in 1999. An exciting new direction for TEDS is its focus on mental health including linkage to NHS medical records, led by Professor Thalia Eley, the new Director of TEDS. And now as the CoTEDS project follows the development of more than 1,500 children of TEDS twins, I can't help but feel like a proud grandparent.

It is incredible to see how TEDS has grown and evolved over the years. I plan to stay closely involved in TEDS as Deputy Director and I really hope you'll continue to be part of this amazing journey too. If you ever want to get in touch, feel free to email me at robert.plomin@kcl.ac.uk.



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Read about how TEDS data are being used in some recent research on the development of anxiety!



THE SCIENCE SECTION

Elisavet, PhD student



Understanding how anxiety symptoms develop, who is more likely to experience them, and when, is a key focus for our team. For my PhD, I have been exploring the development of anxiety symptoms using TEDS data from ages 4 to 26. We found four groups of people following distinct anxiety patterns. The largest group of you (68%) had low anxiety across development. The next biggest group (18%) had low anxiety in early childhood which increased in adolescence, while the third group (11%) had high anxiety in childhood which decreased in adolescence. Finally, we found a small group (3%) who had high anxiety across development. Whilst most of you were in the low anxiety group, it is really important we understand what leads to higher anxiety at these different developmental stages. To do so, we looked at several possible influences, including genetic factors, child characteristics (e.g. hyperactivity levels) and family factors (e.g. home environment). We found that genetic vulnerability to depression and anxiety (calculated using the DNA sample some of you provided us with), as well as peer relationships in the preschool years were some of the key factors that distinguished between the different groups. These results are encouraging, as they suggest that there are specific factors that could be used early in life to identify those who may be at risk of experiencing anxiety or who could benefit from further support.

LIVED EXPERIENCE EXPERTISE

Interviews and Focus Groups

This past year we spoke to TEDS twins to help us understand your personal experiences in areas we would like to explore further.

In April, MSc placement students Grace and Iona interviewed 24 TEDS twins and siblings to understand their thoughts and opinions about a planned research project exploring how ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender impact mental health. These interviews enabled us to hear perspectives from people from a diverse range of backgrounds, which will help us design our future research in a way that is inclusive and accessible to all.

In October, members of the team carried out focus groups with TEDS twins who have experience of anxiety. This was to help inform future funding applications. We found that your generation describe living in a very different world from previous generations. Several of you identified aspects of daily life such as housing and employment that impact your anxiety. Thank you to all those who took part in these projects for their valuable and important contributions to our research.

Scan the QR codes above for blogs on these topics and keep an eye out for our new webpage which highlights this work in greater detail!



Ways to get involved with research!

LEVELS OF ENGAGEMENT

Consult



Provide feedback on a specific research plan/activity

Participate



Participate in a research study

Collaborate



Work directly with the team throughout a project

Support



Help make final decisions on an advisory board

There are lots of different ways to get involved - both as a participant and/or as part of the research process itself! We've outlined a few of them above and will let you know about future opportunities you might want to get involved in via our social media - stay tuned!

TEDS AT A MUSEUM



The TEDS Study is now included in a display in The Science Museum, London. It features in a showcase which describes research that explores our understanding of cognitive abilities and intelligence. It is located in the Who Am I? gallery (location first floor of the Wellcome Wing at the back of the Museum).

THE CHILDREN OF TEDS TWINS CoTEDS

CoTEDS is our study for the Children of TEDS twins! We aim to understand the role that parents play during child development. Your child's other parent can take part too, if applicable to your family. Details to register below!

Vouchers and Rewards!

As a thank you for our participants, we give a **£10 Love2Shop voucher** to everyone who has completed our questionnaire, including co-parents! Your child will also receive a **t-shirt**, an **art set** and **stickers** from CoTEDS! AND we often run **prize draws**, with previous prizes of **£100 vouchers** and **iPads**!



Our sample is 78% mums and 22% dads - Dads, we need you!

We now have over **1500** children taking part!

We still need more

If you are a TEDS twin with children and want to get involved with CoTEDS, scan the QR code or fill out an online form at <https://goo.gl/Cr7Kxy> to register your pregnancy or child.



Have you received your CoTEDS DNA pack?

We are collecting DNA data from CoTEDS families to unravel the interplay between nature and nurture across generations.

Don't forget to return your saliva samples. We are offering a **£10 Love2Shop voucher** for every DNA sample returned!

Need more information or help collecting your sample? Email us at coteds-project@kcl.ac.uk



FUN FACT

Top baby names in CoTEDS are Charlie, Noah and Oliver for boys and Amelia, Olivia and Evie for girls

4% of CoTEDS children are twins - higher than the UK average of 1.7%

Peek-a-boo!

Building blocks

'This little piggy'

CoTEDS children's favourite ways to play



Iona

NEW TO TEDS/COTEDS

I joined the TEDS team in 2022 as a 1+3 MSc/PhD student. During my MSc year I completed a placement with TEDS exploring diversity and inclusive study design for future TEDS research. My PhD will investigate inequalities in anxiety and depression across minority and marginalised groups. Prior to joining the SGDP, I worked as an Operational Scientist at Cambridge Cognition, and completed my BSc in Natural Sciences (Psychology) at the University of Cambridge.

I joined CoTEDS in 2023 to work as a Research Assistant. I completed my PhD in Cognitive Science in 2017 and a BSc-Psychology (Hons) prior to that in Sydney, Australia. I am interested in human development and the nature/nurture interplay so I'm excited to work with the TEDS/CoTEDS teams on such a highly regarded project. My personal research has explored how prospective memory (remembering to do things in the future) is an early cognitive marker of future cognitive decline and dementia.



Catherine



coteds-project@kcl.ac.uk



CoTEDSProject



@Co_TEDS



@tedsproject

YOUR PICS AND STORIES



Ben and Katie
coincidentally are both
TEDS twins!



Twins Eleanor and Abigail
both got married!



Victoria is
expecting twins!



Jack handed in his PhD
thesis!



Amanda had a baby!



Carrie got married with
twin Hannah as MoH!



Lucy got married with
twin Alice by her side!



Charlotte got married
with twin Emily as
bridesmaid!



Paige said 'yes to the dress'
alongside twin Amy and
CoTEDS nephew Oscar!



Stephanie on her
wedding day with
sister Amanda!



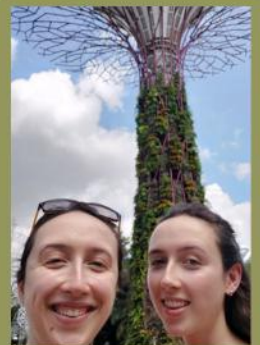
Hannah emigrated to
Austria and Carrie
visited!



Rosie and Sophie did a
memory walk to raise
money for their Nan who
recently passed. Rosie
was secretly pregnant
too!



Dr Daniel - a recent PhD
graduate! With his twin
sister Hayley



Hannah and Charlotte
went to Singapore to
celebrate their almost
completed PhDs!



Zoe got
married!



Victoria and Shaun
got married!



Twins Kate and Lucy
celebrated 28!



Zoe got married with her
twin Amy as her maid of
honour!



"We've been
finding peace
in robins
since our dad
passed away
in 2021, every
time we go
out we see at
least 1. Here's
our latest!"
- Jessica and
Paris



Alice and Victoria
backpacked in Japan and
Victoria donated stem cells!



Louise got married with
twin Laura as her maid of
honour!



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