



## CONCEPT PAPER TEMPLATE

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| <b>Provisional Paper Title:</b>  | Wantedness and perceptions of parent and child relationships |
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| <b>P.I. Sponsor</b><br>(if the proposing author is a student or colleague of an original PI) | Bob Hancox   |

### **Objective of the study:**

To examine how pregnancy wantedness impacts on parent perceptions of the child at age 15 as well as parent and child perceptions of the parent-child relationship at age 15. It is hypothesised that wantedness will not predict parent-child relationship quality after controlling for parent's current perception of their child.

### **Data analysis methods:**

Linear mixed models will be used to first establish associations between measures of pregnancy wantedness and both parent and child perceptions of the parent-child relationship at age 15, with a random effect for family to accommodate the multiple children from some families. Analyses will be stratified by parent sex, but sex interactions will also be estimated from the full data set and reported on.

The potential mediating effects of parental perceptions of the child on the parent-child relationship will then be explored using the approaches from Krull & MacKinnon (2001) and Bauer, Preacher & Gil (2006). Similar analyses on the child perceptions of the parent-child relationship will also be explored. If model assumptions cannot be reasonably satisfied, alternative modelling strategies, such as using mixed quantile regression to model medians instead, will be investigated. Analyses will be performed using Stata 15.1 and R 3.5.1 (or later versions) with standard model diagnostics and statistical significance determined by two-sided  $p < 0.05$ .

### **Variables needed at which ages:**

Wantedness data at age 26, 32 and 38 (note age 38 reports on pregnancies from age 31 onwards – there may be some reports there that relate to NG participants)

Specifically the 2 questions relating to wanting to get pregnant and how happy they felt about the pregnancy

NG data from Relationships questionnaire

NG data from Primary Caregiver Questionnaire, Phone Interviews (dependant on who SM is)

Relationship status at pregnancy

Relationship status when NG is 15

Core data – sex, SES, age at child's birth

### **Significance of the study (for theory, research methods or clinical practice):**

There are few long term data on how pregnancy wantedness impacts on later parental perceptions of the child or the parents' and child's perceptions of the parent-child relationship. The most long-term study in this field comes from data gathered on women (and their children) who were twice refused abortions and represents an extreme case of the consequences of (un)wantedness (David, 2011). There is other research that reports on the combined impact of timing and wantedness for first births only (Rackin & Brasher, 2016). Given that this research indicates that timing or other social factors reduce associations between wantedness and child outcomes (Hummer, Hack & Raley, 2014; Rackin & Brasher, 2016), it is not expected that that wantedness will be directly related to perceptions of the parent-child relationship 15 years post birth, but rather that any such

association will be fully mediated by the parent's current perception of the child. The Dunedin Study and the Next Generation Study are uniquely placed to investigate this issue across multiple pregnancies (each of which may have different levels of wantedness) and also to report on the the parent-child relationship from both points of view, taking into account parental perceptions of the young person. This research is also uniquely placed to examine these issues from the point of view of mothers and fathers, which will make a further unique contribution to the literature around wantedness which has historically only focused on mothers. The findings will be able to inform those involved in pregnancy and family planning services and as well as potential parents. It will also provide an update to previous Dunedin Study research on high rates of unwanted pregnancies among this cohort when they were younger, as reported by Dickson and colleagues (2002).

**References:**

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- Dickson, N., Wilson, M., Herbison, P., Paul, C. (2002). Unwanted pregnancies involving young women and men in a New Zealand birth cohort. *New Zealand Medical Journal, 115*: 155-159.
- Hummer, RA., Hack, KA., & Raley, RK. (2004). Retrospective reports of pregnancy wantedness and child well-being the United States. *Journal of family Issues, 25*: 404-428.
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