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# Effects of Father Absence on Adolescent Depression, Sexual Attitudes, and Substance Use

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Effects of Father Absence on Adolescent Depression, Sexual Attitudes, and Substance Use

Thesis submitted to  
The Graduate College of  
Marshall University

In fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of  
Masters of Arts in  
Clinical Psychology

By:  
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## ABSTRACT

Effects of Father Absence on Adolescent Depression, Sexual Attitudes, and Substance Use

Nicole Marie Hurtack

The purpose of the current study was to investigate the relationship between father absence and depression, sexual attitudes, and substance use on adolescents. Data were collected from forty-nine high school students (28 males, 21 females) from ninth to twelfth grade from a private high school in Pennsylvania. The Beck Depression Inventory-II was used to measure levels of depression. A sexual attitudes and substance use, and family demographic survey were also administered. The results of this study provided no support for the hypothesized relationship between adolescent adjustment and father absence. Father absence did not significantly predict sexual attitudes, depression or substance use. No significant gender differences were found. Conclusions and recommendations for future research were discussed.

## Dedications

I would like to dedicate this first to my grandparents who continue to serve as my source of wisdom, truth, and hard work. I love all of you. Secondly, I would like to dedicate this towards my family and friends who were always there to give me that extra push and encouragement when I needed it most. My parents, brother, and sister-in-law could not have been any more supportive. You guys have made me feel blessed. My two nieces, Hannah and Haley, have always been there to put a smile on my face and give me hugs of encouragement. Lastly, even in the midst of Iraq, I want to thank my boyfriend for providing me the love and strength to reach all endeavors.

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## Effects of the Absence of the Father on Adolescent Depression, Sexual Attitudes and Substance Use.

### *Divorce Likelihood*

It is commonly known that half of all marriages end in divorce; half of these include adolescents (Portnoy, 2008). Therefore, each year thousands of adolescents will experience the divorce of their parents (Farrington, 2006). As a result there is a double exposure effect for adolescents as they not only experience the conflict and distress of their parent's marital difficulties but also of the divorce. Such family conflict, when intense, can have a detrimental effect on the overall health of an adolescent (Michael, Torres, & Seemann, 2007). Therefore it is obvious why divorce strikes significant interest as it affects the public health of adolescents, and society at large, as these individuals must deal with an array of adjustment problems associated with the divorce and well as normal adolescent concerns (Storksen, Roysamb, Holmen & Tambs, 2006).

### Effects of Divorce

#### *Adolescent Adjustment*

Adolescence is a period of transition and change and thus there is greater vulnerability to the negative effects of situational stressors such as grief. Under such stress, an adolescent may experience trouble creating a healthy balance and to function normally in their daily activities (Trowell & Etchegoyen, 2002). When compared to adolescents from intact families, those adolescents from divorced families were found to have more internalizing problems (e.g. anxiety, depression) and external problems (e.g. conduct problems) involving social and school issues (Storksen, Roysamn, Holmen & Tambs, 2006). The degree of family intactness appeared to be protective as adolescents from an intact family only experienced symptoms of distress 14% of the time compared to those from divorced families who experienced such symptoms 30% of

the time (Storksen, Roysamn, Holmen & Tambs, 2006).

*Depression.* An individual's attributions about the symptoms of depression involve both internal and external loci of control. When attributions focus on the internal locus of control, adolescents have a sense of self-blame, and likewise, with the external locus of control, they have feelings of helplessness. Positive correlations were found between an adolescent's level of depression and their tendency to attribute negative outcomes to causes that they consider internal, stable, and global (Siegel & Griffin, 1984). Depressive symptoms in adolescents have been linked to their parents' marital status (Siegel & Griffin, 1984). Adolescents from single parent families displayed more adjustment problems (Breivik & Olweus, 2006). Similarly, when compared to children from intact families, children from divorced families sought out more father involvement (Finley & Schwartz, 2007). This, attention has also been brought to the correlation between a negative coping style and depression particularly as adolescents from divorced families appear to experience higher levels of depression than those of intact families (Seeman, 1997). However, there was not a significant difference between males and females (Brubeck & Beer, 1992).

### *Divorce and Parenting*

In the majority of custody battles (85% of the time), the mother is granted legal custody of the couple's children. As a result, the father is left to only see the children on arrangement based visits, with the potential to harm the father-child relationship (Finley & Schwartz, 2007). The dynamics and effects of a one-parent household following a divorce needs further study as much of the difficulties experienced in the transition stage of adolescence can be magnified as they experience dramatic changes in living arrangements, rules, new relationships, and overall expectations (Stoll, Arnaut, Fromme, & Felker-Thayer, 2005). There is also less parental control

and monitoring in divorced family situations as there is only one parent in the household (Dankowski, Payer, & Steinberg, 1996).

### *Community Adjustment*

There are multiple visible signs that an adolescent may be experiencing difficulty adjusting to a divorce including substance abuse, risky sexual behavior, and contemplating/attempting suicide (Farrington, 2006; Seeman, 1997; Trowell & Etchegoyen, 2002; Verkler & Harrar, 2003). Unfortunately adolescents who resided in a single mother household were found to display several different adjustment problems that were not found among households with two parents including substance use, drug use, and antisocial behavior (Breivik & Olweus, 2006).

*Academic achievement.* Approximately 29% of adolescents from single-parents households were expected to drop out of high school compared to the 13% of adolescents from intact families. When parents divorce, there is typically a decline in the family's financial status, and as a result, adolescents are provided with fewer opportunities, which may result in the adolescent dropping out of school. The probability of failing out of school has been connected with earning lower grades, depression, delinquency, and being 16 years of age. Attention has been paid to the issue of school failure as it is linked to delinquent behavior and family influences. Positive involvement of the father appeared to be a moderating factor. When nonresident fathers were more involved with their adolescent children, there was a lower chance of school failure. When nonresident fathers made a commitment to talk to their children about school, grades, and assignments, it was found that adolescents increased their academic performance. With this father interaction, there was found to be less difficulty within the family structure (Menning, 2006).

*Sexual attitudes.* Risk factors, such as parental divorce and the disruption of the family, have been strongly linked to adolescent sexual behavior. When fathers were absent from a male's life, adolescent males were more prone to act out in sexual behavior. At the same time, the lack of a father figure took away the ability for a child to talk to the same-sex about sexual and contraception inquiries (Dankowski, Payer, & Steinberg, 1996). Consequently, there is a strong link between children who grow up in a divorced household and premarital pregnancy. By reducing this attachment, the internalization of behavioral control may be lessened (Aseltine & Doucet, 2003). The lack of parental involvement has been found to contribute to youth creating bonds with deviant peers that can result in sexual activity. Adolescents attempt to meet their needs by creating bonds that may be absent in their family structure (Aseltine & Doucet, 2003). Consistent with this was noted a strong connection between severe adverse effects in an adolescent's life, and the possibilities of a teenage pregnancy (Anda, Chapman, Felitti, Edwards, Williamson, Croft, & Giles, 2002).

*Substance Use.* Over 1.3 million children in the age range of 13-18 have a serious alcohol problem (Schiff & Cavaiola, 1990). The problem of substance abuse has been related to the effects of divorce (Lamminpaa, 1995). Use of alcohol can contribute to many different factors, including familial problems. In studies of children prone to develop a dependence on alcohol, the home environment was considered to be a factor, as many of the children studied were found to be from divorced families (Schiff & Cavailoa, 1990). Adolescents who resided with their father after a divorce were reported to have higher levels of antisocial behaviors and alcohol consumption (Breivik & Olweus, 2006). It is believed that adolescents resort to drinking as a result of the overwhelming feelings of their life being disrupted by the breakup of their biological family (Stoll, Arnaut, Fromme, & Felker-Thayer, 2005). Adolescent boys from

divorce families were found to have an increase in alcohol use, whereas adolescent girls were not (Kirby, 2006; Paxton, Valois, & Drane, 2007).

### *Gender Differences*

Through research on divorce, generalizations have been made regarding gender-specific impacts. Majority of children lived with their mothers following a divorce, resulting in living situations with a lower household income (Portnoy, 2008). When there was a close mother-child relationship, and the children rated overall feeling of self positively, there appeared to be a protective effect on the father-child relationship keeping it from deteriorating (Scott, Booth, King, & Johnson, 2007). Seventy percent of the children from intact families report a close relationship with their father, however, with divorced families, less than 1/3 of the adolescents report such closeness with their biological father. Generally, adolescents tend to view their fathers as less caring than their mother. However, if an adolescent expressed a strong relationship with same sex parent after a divorce resulting in separation, they displayed an increase in delinquent behaviors (Videon, 2002).

*Boys.* Male adolescents from divorced families have been found to enter into intimate relationships at an earlier age, and engaged in more risky behaviors compared to those males from intact families (Spruijt & Duindam, 2005). Many adolescent boys have been found to display a feeling of abandonment when their father left the house due to a divorce. Adolescent boys who have experienced the loss of a father may not have that male role model in their life to turn to for attention and direction. As a result, they may act in dangerous and irresponsible ways to show off to others (Trowell & Etchegoyen, 2002).

*Girls.* Due to the higher levels of desired involvement compared to the actual father involvement, many children are left with unfilled needs. Certainly, the emotional component of

those unmet needs could explain why females experience a stronger effect of divorce than males. However, it is the females that express more desire for their fathers to create more involvement in their lives (Finley & Schwartz, 2007). Much of the distress and depression that adolescents experience can be a result of all the problems that occur before, during, and after the divorce (Storksen, Roysamb, Holmen, & Tambs, 2006). Long term effects of distress and depression were found to be stronger for adolescent girls than boys (Storksen, Roysamb, Holmen, & Tambs, 2006).

### Hypotheses

This study was conducted in order to monitor how the absence of the father affected an adolescent's depression, sexual attitudes, and substance use. It was hypothesized that children who experience the absence of their father will have higher levels of depression. It was hypothesized that children who experience the absence of their father will have more liberalized sexual attitudes. It was hypothesized that children who experience the absence of their father will engage in substance use.

### Method

#### *Participants*

Students in grades 9-12 in a private school were used to collect the data. Of the 234 students who attended this high school, 53 students participated in the study. It was not required that the child have an absent father, because data from both divorced and intact families would be used. Of the 53 participants who began the study, 48 actually completed all questionnaires. In regards to the breakdown of the subjects, there were 12 (9<sup>th</sup> grade), 9 (10<sup>th</sup> grade), 12 (11<sup>th</sup> grade), and 15 (12<sup>th</sup> grade). There were 27 subjects (16-females, 11-males) whose biological parents were still married, and 21 subjects (11-females, 10-males) that experienced a divorce.

### *Instrumentation*

The four instruments provided to the students were given in a specified order to control for reactive instrumentation. The order of presentation was the depression, sexual attitudes, substance use, and then the family demographic survey. The Beck Depression Inventory-II (BDI-II) was used to evaluate the level of depression that the adolescents who experienced the absence of the father, and those who did not experienced (Beck, Steer, & Brown, 1996). Likewise, all the adolescents also filled out a sexual attitudes survey to evaluate their current thoughts regarding different sexual behaviors (Tubre, 2007). Lastly, the adolescents filled out a substance use survey to evaluate the amount of alcohol they do/do not use (Babor, Higgins-Bibble, Saunders, & Montiero, 2001). The students also filled out a family demographic survey (Allen, 1998).

### *Procedure*

Each child was required to have their parents sign a consent form (Appendix A), as well as the child signing an assent form (Appendix B) giving their permission with the added understanding that we would make every possible effort to protect their identity and the data they provided. Participant responded to four questionnaires, depression, sexual attitudes, substance use, and demographics.

Immediately following the completion of the questionnaires, they were divided into two groups. The questionnaires were placed in one of two groups: father absence and no father absence. Students completed the surveys regarding different components of their lives during their homeroom periods. Identity of each student was coded, and data was collected and processed through SPSS to determine what relationships exist between father absence and depression, sexual attitudes, and substance use.

## Results

The dependent measures, depression, sexual attitudes, and substance use, were used to measure the effect of father absence on adolescents. The dependent variables were analyzed by intact and divorced families.

Based on the one way analysis of variance, the effect of father absence on depression was not significant, ( $F(1, 46) = .155, p = .696$ ). These results failed to support the hypothesis that children who experienced father absence will have higher levels of depression.

Based on the one way analysis of variance, the effect of father absence on sexual attitudes was not significant, ( $F(1, 46) = 2.16, p = .013$ ). These results failed to support the hypothesis that children who experienced father absence will have more liberalized attitudes to sex.

Based on the one way analysis of variance, the effect of father absence on substance use was not significant, ( $F(1, 46) = 2.30, p = .136$ ). These results failed to support the hypothesis that children who experienced father absence will engage in substance use.

The means and standard deviations for depression are shown in Table 1. The results show that there is not a significance difference in the levels of depression amongst adolescents from intact and divorced families. Although there was not a significant difference amongst the means, the intact family did exhibit the higher mean score. The means and standard deviations for sexual attitudes are shown in Table 2. The results proved to be insignificant due to the homogeneity of variance due to the standard deviation of intact being twice the amount of the divorced group. The means and standard deviations for substance use are shown in Table 3. There was not a significant difference, however, the mean scores for the divorced group was slightly higher than the intact group.

The crosstabulation between gender and relationship with father is shown in Table 4. Closer relationships were with biological fathers within intact than divorced families. Many of the children in the divorced group noted no relationship with their father at all (n=10). Table 5 clearly shows that adolescents whose biological parents are still married saw their father face to face more often than those whose parents were divorced. The same can be said for the previous year as well in Table 6. The intact group had much more contact with their father than the divorced group.

Therefore, the results of this study provided no support for the hypothesized relationship between adolescent adjustment and father absence. Father absence does not significantly predict depression, sexual attitudes, or substance use.

### Discussion

The results of this study were proved to be insignificant for both intact and divorced families. Results of this study did not confirm the findings reported in the literature. The results of this study opened up different avenues for suggestions of future studies as well as implications about this particular sample group. Although neither group proved to be significant in the areas of depression, sexual attitudes, or substance use, many different suggestions were found.

Much of the literature suggested that adolescents from divorced families experience higher levels of depression, more liberal attitudes, and increased substance use. As mentioned previously, an adolescent's level of depression can be linked to their parent's marital status (Siegal & Griffin, 1984). The results of this study suggested otherwise. There was no significant difference between the two groups which could suggest that it may not be divorce that causes increased depression, but other factors such as the amount of contact with father, or if the relationship pattern of parents, or even normal adolescent strains.

Literature had suggested that the lack of parental involvement has been found to contribute to youth creating bonds with deviant peers that can result in sexual activity (Aseltine & Doucet, 2003). The results of sexual attitudes could have been influenced by what morals their parents endorse within their own religion, an adolescents level of confidence to make proper decisions relating to their sexual needs and desires, or having a sample of adolescents who engage in less risky sexual behavior or have decided to remain abstinent. There was not a significant difference which may suggest these additional reasons for why this result from previous literature was not found with this sample group.

In regards to the substance use survey, results can only be significant for the substance use survey if mean scores had been eight or above by incorporating questions that analyzed quantity and frequency of alcohol use. Any score of eight or above can be associated for harmful or hazardous drinking (Babor, Higgins-Bibble, Saunders, & Montiero, 2001). There was no significant difference found among the groups in this study. Previous literature had confirmed that the adolescent males from divorced families increased their alcohol use more than females, but in this study, there was not a significant difference (Kirby, 2006; Paxton, Valois & Drane, 2007).

After analyzing the results of all three of the dependent variables, this data is strongly suggesting that one affecting factor could be the amount of contact that the adolescents have with their father rather than the divorce that cause adjustment problems. In Table 5 and 6, the amount of contact each child had with their father significantly differed between the intact and divorced groups. Previous studies have demonstrated that children who had the absence of a father do seek out more father involvement (Finley & Schwartz, 2007), but it may be the result of contact with the father rather than the actual divorce. Both groups could be affected by the level of

contact. Although majority of the intact group saw their father on a regular basis, it was not found how much time they actually spent with them.

Results show for this sample group that there was not any significant difference between depression, sexual attitudes, or substance use, but the amount of contact greatly differed. Many of the subjects in the divorce group had noted a weaker relationship with their father compared to their peers in intact families. Adolescents create the bonds they are missing within their family and may choose friends that exhibit deviant behavior (Aseltine & Doucet, 2008), and this could occur within both intact and divorce families. The current study expanded on exploring the effects that the absence of the father could have on an adolescent.

There were several limitations of this study that should be mentioned. Since the children were minor, it was necessary for their parents to sign the informed consent form. The children either did not deliver the letter to their parents, or they parents decided to not return the consent. Either way, there were children from both intact and divorced families that were not involved in the data. A few more children decided to not participate in the study when they learned more about the study and decided to not sign the Child Assent form. Although the small sample size was enough to detect any differences, the additional students within the school could have significantly affected the results if they had participated. The majority of the subjects were from Roman Catholic families which could have confounded the results. The religious background could have served as a mediating variable. The religious beliefs may have affected high conflict families staying together or reducing the effects of father absence on depression, sexual attitudes, and substance use. The results showed that children who experience divorce may cope with the absence of their father differently than children in other literature. The responses may have

differed on each of the surveys depending on the maturity level of the subjects, as well as the level of peer pressure one experiences.

The findings of this study suggest a couple of avenues for future research. It would be useful to assess how absence of the father affects additional areas of an adolescent's life. In addition, one could expand on this study through different avenues of additional subjects and dependent variables. One could also explore the results of divorce on different religious backgrounds. Future research could include examining further gender and the relationship with their father. In addition, it could be vital to explore the amount of contact amongst both groups with their father and the positive/negative effects. In this study, all adolescents from the intact group had seen their father once a week or more, however the divorced group was scattered all over in reference to how much they saw their father.

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Table 1.

*ANOVA Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Depression in Intact/Divorced Families.*

---

Measure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Depression-Intact	27	6.52	7.31
Depression-Divorced	21	5.71	6.63

---

Table 2

*ANOVA Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Sexual Attitudes in Intact/Divorced Families.*

---

Measure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Sexual Attitudes-Intact	27	56.30	5.17
Sexual Attitude-Divorced	21	52.24	5.68

---

Table 3.

*ANOVA Mean Score and Standard Deviation of Substance Use in Intact/Divorced Families.*

---

Measure	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Substance Use-Intact	27	1.85	3.22
Substance Use-Divorced	21	3.86	5.83

---

Table 4.

*Crosstabulation of Gender and Relationship with Father*

Measure	Very Close	Somewhat Close	Not Very Close	No Relationship
Intact				
Female	6	1	9	0
Male	7	2	2	0
Divorced				
Female	2	0	4	4
Male	1	3	1	5

Table 5.

*Crosstabulation of Face to Face Contact This Year in Intact/Divorced*


---

Measure	Intact	Divorced
Once a week or more	27	5
Once a month	0	3
Twice a month	0	1
Less than once a month	0	3
No face-to-face contact	0	9

---

*Table 6.**Crosstabulation of Face to Face Contact Last Year in Intact/Divorced*


---

Measure	Intact	Divorced
Once a week or more	27	6
Once a month	0	2
Twice a month	0	1
Less than once a month	0	4
No face-to-face contact	0	8

---

## Appendix A

# Parental Consent/Permission

## Effects of the Absence of the Father on Adolescent's Depression, Sexual Attitudes, and Substance Abuse.

Stephen O'Keefe Ph.D. Principal Investigator

Nicole Hurtrack, B.A., Co-Investigator

### Introduction

Your child is invited (with your permission) to be in a research study. Research studies are designed to gain scientific knowledge that may help other people in the future. Your child may or may not receive any benefit from being part of the study. There may also be risks associated with being part of research studies. If there are any risks involved in this study then they will be described in this consent. Participation is voluntary so please take your time to make your decision, and ask your research investigator or research staff to explain any words or information that you do not understand.

### Why Is This Study Being Done?

The purpose of this study is to examine the effects of depression, sexual attitudes, and substance abuse on adolescents who experience the absence of their father following a divorce. We are curious to see how responses from divorced families compared to intact families as well as if the effects are due to divorce, divorce/absence of the family, or just absence of the father.

### How Many Will Take Part In The Study?

About 243 children will take part in this study. A total of 243 subjects are the most that would be able to enter the study.

### What Is Involved In This Research Study?

As a participant in this study, it will be required of your child to provide the best answer to each of the surveys provided to them regarding questions about topics of depression, sexual attitudes and substance abuse as well as questioning relating to your current family situation.

### How Long Will Your Child Be In The Study?

Your child will be in the study for about an hour.

You or your child can decide to stop participation at any time. If you decide to stop your child's participation in the study we encourage you to talk to the study investigator or study staff as soon as possible.

The study investigator may stop your child from taking part in this study at any time if he/she believes it is in your child's best interest; if your child does not follow the study rules; or if the study is stopped.

### *What Are The Risks Of The Study?*

There are no known risks to those who take part in this study.

There may also be other side effects that we cannot predict. You should tell the researchers if any of these risks bother or worry you.

### *Are There Benefits To Taking Part In The Study?*

If you agree to allow your child to take part in this study, there may or may not be direct benefit to them. We hope the information learned from this study will benefit other people in the future. The benefits of participating in this study may be exploring how divorce in a family may have affected your child as well as examining their current stance with depression, sexual attitudes, and substance abuse.

### *What About Confidentiality?*

We will do our best to make sure that your child's personal information is kept confidential. However, we cannot guarantee absolute confidentiality. Federal law says we must keep your child's study records private. Nevertheless, under unforeseen and rare circumstances, we may be required by law to allow certain agencies to view your child's records. Those agencies would include the Marshall University IRB, Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and the federal Office of Human Research Protection (OHRP). This is to make sure that we are protecting your child's rights and safety. If we publish the information we learn from this study, your child will not be identified by name or in any other way.

### *What Are The Costs Of Taking Part In This Study?*

There are no costs to you for allowing your child to take part in this study. All the study costs, including any study tests, supplies and procedures related directly to the study, will be paid for by the study.

### *Will You Be Paid For Participation?*

You will receive no payment or other compensation for your child's participation in this study.

### *What Are Your Rights As A Research Study Participant?*

Taking part in this study is voluntary. You may choose not to allow your child to take part or you may withdraw them from the study at any time. Refusing to participate or leaving the study

will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which you or your child are entitled. If you decide to stop your child's participation in the study we encourage you to talk to the investigators or study staff first.

### *Whom Do You Call If You Have Questions Or Problems?*

For questions about the study or in the event of a research-related injury, contact the study investigator Stephen O'Keefe at 304-746-1937 or co-investigator Nikki at 814-341-5848. You should also call the investigator if you have a concern or complaint about the research.

For questions about your rights as a research participant, contact the Marshall University IRB#2 Chairman Dr. Stephen Cooper at (304) 696-7320. You may also call this number if:

- You have concerns or complaints about the research.
- The research staff cannot be reached.
- You want to talk to someone other than the research staff.

You will be given a signed and dated copy of this consent form.

### ***SIGNATURES***

You grant permission for your child \_\_\_\_\_ to take part in this study. You have had a chance to ask questions about this study and have had those questions answered. By signing this consent form you are stating that you are not giving up any legal rights to which you or your child are entitled.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Person Obtaining Consent (Printed)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Person Obtaining Consent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## **Appendix B**

Marshall University

### Child's Assent for Being in a Research Study

Title: Effects of the Absence of the Father After a Divorce on Adolescent's Depression, Sexual Attitudes, and Substance Abuse.

#### Why are you here?

We are asking you to take part in a research study because we are trying to learn more about the effects of depression, sexual behavior, and substance abuse on adolescents who experience the absence of their father following a divorce compared to peers from intact families. We are inviting you to be in the study because you are in the age range we are interested in and hope you can provide us information on your family structure and stance with depression, sexual behavior, and substance abuse.

#### Why are they doing this study?

This study is being conducted to see if there are any negative effects that occur to adolescents who experience the divorce of their parents. We are more focused on the families in which the father is absent. We are curious to see how responses from divorced families compare to intact families

#### What will happen to you?

As a participant in this study, it will be required of you to provide you best answer to each of the surveys provided to you regarding questions about topics of depression, sexual behavior, and substance abuse as well as questioning relating to your current family situation.

#### Will the study hurt?

There are no known risks to those who take part in this study.

#### Will the study help you?

If you agree to take part in this study, there may or may not be direct benefit to you. We hope the information learned from this study will benefit other people in the future. The benefits of participating in this study may be exploring how divorce in a family may have affected you as well as examining your current stance with depression, sexual behavior, and substance abuse.

What if you have any questions?

You can ask any questions that you have about the study. If you have a question later that you didn't think of now, you can call me 814-341-5848 or ask me next time.

Do your parents know about this?

This study was explained to your parents and they said that you could be in it if you want. You can talk this over with them before you decide.

Do you have to be in the study?

You do not have to be in the study. No one will be upset if you don't want to do this. If you don't want to be in this study, you just have to tell them. You can say yes now and change your mind later. It's up to you.

Putting a checkmark by the word YES and writing your name after that means that that you agree to be in the study, and know what will happen to you. If you decide to quit the study all you have to do is tell the person in charge.

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You have talked to the researcher about the study. You have had all of your questions answered. You understand that you can withdraw from this study at any time and no one will be angry or upset with you. Indicate your choice below:

*(Check One)*

\_\_\_ **YES**, you want to be in the study.      \_\_\_ **NO**, you do not want to be in the study.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Child *(Print)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Child

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Witness *(Print)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Researcher *(Print)*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Researcher

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix C



Office of Research Integrity  
Institutional Review Board

Friday, March 21, 2008

Stephen L. O'Keefe, Ph.D.  
Psychology  
MUGC  
South Charleston, WV. 25303

RE: IRB Study # 9175                      At: Marshall IRB 2

Dear Dr. O'Keefe:

**Protocol Title:**

Effects of Absence of Father on Adolescent's Depression, Attitudes on Sexual Behavior and Substance Use

Expiration Date: 3/20/2009

Our Internal #: 4622

Type of Change: (Other)    Expedited

Expedited ? :

Date of Change: 3/21/2008

Date Received: 3/21/2008

On Meeting Date: 4/17/2008

**Description:** In accordance with 45CFR46.110(a)(7), the above study and informed consent was granted Expedited approval today by the Marshall University IRB#2 Chair for the period of 12 months. The approval will expire 3/20/08. A continuing review request for this study must be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the expiration date. This study is for student Nicole Hurtack.

The purpose of this study is to determine if the problems that adolescents face in regards to depression, sexual attitudes, and substance use are correlated with divorce, divorce/absence of the father, or absence of the father.

Respectfully yours,

Stephen D. Cooper, Ph.D.  
Marshall University IRB #2 Chairperson

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