Welcome to the first newsletter of the Twin Project at the University of Texas at Austin! We hope that this finds your family happy and healthy. To begin, we would like to tell you a little bit about ourselves. The Twin Project is a research collaboration between Dr. Paige Harden and Dr. Elliot Tucker-Drob. So far, it has been a 2 year project focusing on children and adolescents. We are exploring a variety of aspects of twins’ lives; twins intrigue us! Primarily, we are focusing on academic and home environments, neighborhoods, schools, religion, twins’ relationships with family and friends, and their interests and activities. We are also interested in how twins are similar and different from one another.

What is happening currently with the project?

At the Twin Project we are currently in the phase of collecting data from participants like you! We have focused on recruiting families from 7 school districts: Austin, Del Valle, Eanes, Lake Travis, Leander, Manor, and Pflugerville.
A Message from the Investigators

Dear Twin, Triplet, and Quadruplet Families—
We’ve been in Texas for just over 2 years and wow—the Twin Project has grown by leaps and bounds. We’ve now collected data on over 300 families of multiples and more families are joining us every day. This incredible project is beginning to pay off—literally. Last year, Dr. Tucker-Drob was awarded a $250,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to fund his research with twins. This year, Dr. Harden was slated to receive another $250,000 to collect new data in Texas twin families. Besides giving us new money to run the lab (and pay you!) these grants are a sign that the Project is producing new findings that major research agencies think are worth investing in. In the last year, we have published 11 articles in scientific journals on topics ranging from preschool to puberty to personality. Right now, we are planning several new exciting projects, including a project for parents of “tiny twins” (age 0—5), and a chance for you to get your DNA tested. (Are you REALLY an identical twin? This would let you know for sure!)

We hope you will join us for the research studies we have lined up for the future. Thank you so much for all you have given to the Twin Project! Have a happy spring!

- Dr. Harden and Dr. Tucker-Drob

Some introductions are in order...

Dr. Paige Harden received her degree in Clinical Psychology from the University of Virginia in 2009. After graduate school, she completed an internship at Harvard Medical School’s McLean Hospital in Massachusetts. Dr. Harden’s primary research interests include how genetic factors combine with family environments and social experiences. By using data from twins and their families, she is able to investigate risk taking behaviors and how children are influenced by peers. Her research has received the Thompson Award from the Behavior Genetics Association. Congratulations, Dr. Harden!

Dr. Elliot Tucker-Drob received his degree in Psychology from the University of Virginia in 2009. He completed fellowships at Harvard Medical School as well as the Max Planck Institute for Human Development. He uses a lifespan approach to aging and human development. He finds individual differences fascinating! In addition, Dr. Tucker-Drob also studies developmental changes in academic achievement and cognitive abilities. In the photo to the right, Dr. Tucker-Drob is being interviewed by Good Day Austin, a local morning news program on Fox 7.
What do Twin Parents Do?

Have you ever wondered what kind of jobs twin parents have? Here at the Twin Project, we are interested in parents’ professions and what areas they work in. The chart on the right depicts the career fields of the parents that have responded so far. Each field may include a variety of jobs. For example, healthcare ranges from doctors to dentists to x-ray technicians. The “other” category has even more variety; some specific professions include dog breeding, wine making, and being a wedding officiant!

Clockwise from top, read titles left to right:
- accounting, 2%
- education, 15%
- government, 4%
- law enforcement, 2%
- marketing, 3%
- sales, 12%
- caregiver, 2%
- engineering, 5%
- healthcare, 13%
- legal, 3%
- other, 9%
- technology, 9%
- consulting, 2%
- financial, 3%
- insurance, 2%
- manufacturing, 3%
- real estate, 3%
- trades, 8%

Did you know...

- 57% of twin parents answered that their twins are not “as alike as two peas in a pod” while 13% are “exactly alike”
- 61% report strangers and teachers have no trouble telling the twins apart

Get the Facts!

- Only 42% of twins in the Twin Project have hair color that is “exactly alike” while 24% have completely different hair color!
- 40% of adolescent twins studied say that they strongly agree with “being full of energy”
- 48% of twins surveyed in grade 5 and below report that they “never” surf the internet, while 12% do “almost every day”
Meet our Graduate Students

Daniel Briley. Daniel is a second year in the Individual Differences and Evolutionary Psychology area. Before coming to UT, he attended college at Pepperdine University. His broad research interest is in understanding how personality shapes and influences the way that people interact and understand the world around them.

Maire Carlson. Marie is a first year in Clinical Psychology. She graduated from the University of Minnesota with a BA in Psychology and Sociology. Her research interests include studying the course and causes of externalizing psychopathology.

Amanda Cheung. Amanda is a first year in Clinical Psychology. Prior to UT, she attended Wisconsin-Madison. In particular, she is interested in studying individual differences in the development of antisocial behaviors.

Natalie Kretsch. Natalie is a second year in the Clinical Psychology program. She graduated from Brown University. Her research focuses on the interaction between biological and psychosocial factors that contribute to externalizing problems in adolescence.

Meet our Project Managers

Davin Duval
Davin graduated from University of Florida in 2010 and has been with the lab since last fall. During her senior year, she completed a thesis focusing on cyber aggression, cyber victimization, and early adolescent social hierarchy.

Cassy Moreno
Cassy graduated from UT in 2011 and has been with the lab for 2 years. Her areas of interest include abnormal psychology, internalizing behaviors, and developmental psychopathology.

Here at the Twin Project we would sincerely like to thank you for your time and effort. Without families like yours, our research would not be possible. Thank you!