



UCNets News

Issue Number 2, January 2018

Once again, we write to thank you for having participated in the first two waves of the UCNets Social Networks Study. Another year has gone by since the last time you participated in our study and we are now ready to embark on the third wave of the project. In this Newsletter, we wish to share some of the early ways that your contribution to research on social ties and health issues have been explored by our researchers.

As part of our panel of over 1,000 Bay Area residents, you have honored us with your continued participation and trust. The data – and stories – that you've shared are part of a data project being analyzed now by scholars and doctoral students at UC Berkeley and elsewhere. Our team of researchers is, like you, a panel of young adults and older adults.

We are just now beginning to see patterns emerging from the changes occurring between the first wave to the next wave of data: changes in your families, work, and health experiences. How these changes are the result of – or the cause of – changes in your social networks is the topic of our current research.

The Wave 3 version of the survey will go into motion in early 2018, so we will be contacting you shortly. Let us know if your contact information has changed by calling (toll-free) at 1-877-932-0614 or emailing ucnets@berkeley.edu. You may notice that some questions have been dropped and others have been added. And you will receive a check for **\$50** (up from \$35 last time) upon completion of the survey.

In the meantime, please enjoy some new results from our study. Once again, we thank you and look forward to the next wave very soon.

Also, we are partnering with a different company this wave to assist us in working with you: The Henne Group, in San Francisco. Many of the same people you know from earlier waves are still part of this team, and the contact information has not changed.

Sincerely,

Professor Claude Fischer
Principal Investigator

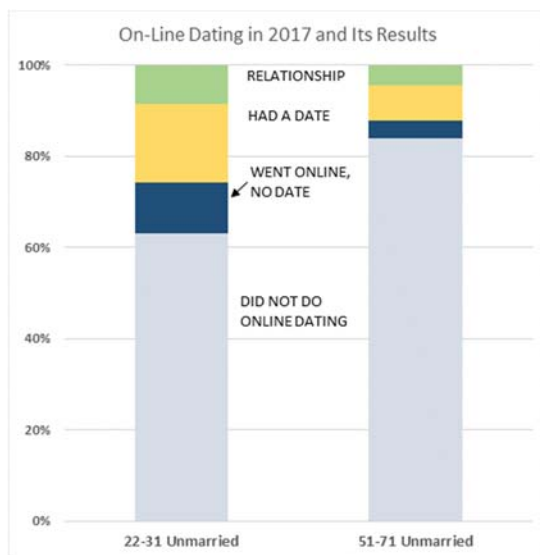
Results from the First Two Waves

Most of our findings about the connections among changes in people's lives, health, and personal relationships will emerge after all three waves of the survey have been completed in 2018. Below, we present some interesting bits of information that emerged from the first two waves.

Life Transitions

One of the primary purposes of this study is to understand how transitions and social networks interact with each other. Nearly half of the younger adults in our panel moved since the last survey wave, compared with under 10% of older respondents. As to work life, 54 people retired, 23 people seemingly "un-retired," and 59 people – all young – reported graduating or leaving school. As to family life, 27 people got married in the past year, 7 divorced or separated, and 23 reported having a new child or grandchild. On the other side of the life course, 5 people lost a spouse, 64 people lost a parent, and 112 people lost a friend. In the coming year, we will be looking at the meaning of those transitions for the size, characteristics, and changes in your network of friends and family.

Internet Dating

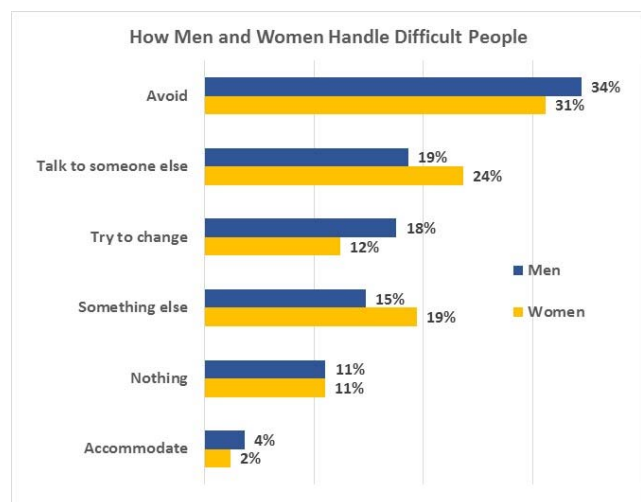


Among the unmarried young adult group, we found that 37% had used online dating since the first survey; 70% of those had a date as a result, and 33% of those who dated started a relationship. That means that 9% of these unmarried 21-30 year olds (the age they were when we started this study) had a relationship in 2017 because of online dating. Among the unmarried older adults (50-70 at the beginning of the study), the numbers were slightly less in terms of use – 16% tried online dating – but higher in terms of outcome: 76% of those dated and 36% of those who dated started relationship, so 4% of all older unmarried respondents ended up in 2017 with a relationship that started online. In subsequent research, we can look at whether the people who

used the internet for dating felt they had enough friends to rely on, compared to single adults who did not.

Dealing with Difficult People

About 70% of you said that there is at least one difficult person in your life. On average, people who reported at least one difficult person reported 2 such people, with 10% reporting 4 or more. We asked what you do to handle the difficult person in your life. As you can see in the graph to the right, people take diverging

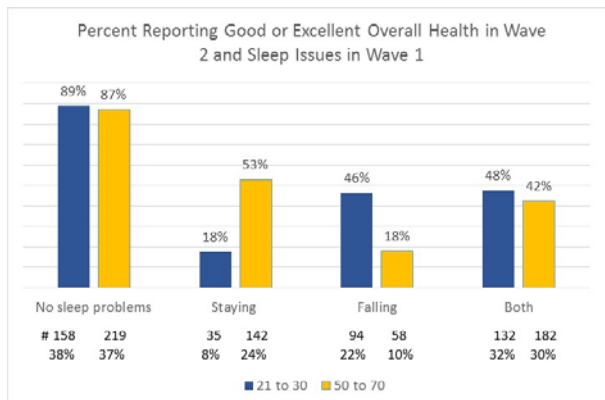


solutions: trying to make the relationship work and avoiding the person are the two biggest responses. However, most people don't try just one thing – about one out of five both try to accommodate AND avoid. Fortunately, difficult people don't seem to be driving others to drink: those who reported at least one difficult person in their network drank on average almost 1 fewer drinks per week than those that did not (3.6 drinks vs 4.4 a week).

Sleeping and Perchance to Dream

We asked whether people have trouble sleeping – either falling asleep or staying asleep – and we are beginning to explore this data, too. About one-third have no trouble sleeping, and fewer than half have trouble both falling and staying asleep. Interestingly, younger adults are more likely to have trouble falling asleep compared to older adults (22% vs 10%), whereas the older adults have more trouble staying asleep (24% of older vs 8% of younger adults).

How does sleeping relate to health? We took your Wave 1 sleeping patterns and compared them to overall health at Wave 2. As you can see in the next graph, people with no sleep issues



are very likely to be in good or excellent health. In contrast, fewer than one in five young adults who had trouble staying asleep, and one in five older adults who had trouble falling asleep, reported good or excellent health. Fortunately, in both cases, those groups are the least likely to report that kind of sleep issue. Just under half of those who report both sleep issues report good or excellent health. We don't know why that's the case, but clearly sleeping is an important facet of health.

Publications

Research like ours is funded with the goal of spreading what we learn to practitioners and policymakers. The way we do that is through publishing articles and giving conference presentations. We are happy to say that we have begun doing so even with just our early results. Here are a few examples (and again, a hearty thank-you for making this possible!):

Shira Offer and Claude S. Fischer. "Calling on Kin: The Place of Adult Children and Parents in Egocentric Networks." In press in *Together Through Time: Social Networks and the Life Course*, edited by Duane Alwin, Diane Felmlee and Derek Kreager.

Shira Offer and Claude S. Fischer "Difficult People: Who is Perceived to be Demanding in Personal Networks and Why Are They There?" *American Sociological Review*, in press.

Keun Bok Lee. "Who gets advice on weight loss from physicians? Network effects on receiving advice on weight loss." Presented at the 2017 Sunbelt Conference of the International Network for Social Network Analysis, held in Beijing, China.

Stay tuned for more!

The key findings will emerge when we have collected all three waves of surveys. Then we will be able to say something about how people's social ties affect and are affected by their life experiences. That is why we are so grateful for both your past and future cooperation.



UCNets – The University of California Social Networks Study
Berkeley Population Center
University of California
2232 Piedmont Street
Berkeley, CA 94720-2120

Firstname Lastname
Address
City, CA zipcode

Address Correction and Return Requested