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# A LONGITUDINAL STUDY OF SIBLING RELATIONSHIPS - CHILDHOOD TO ADULTHOOD

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# INTRODUCTION

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Aging of population

Likely reliance on siblings for some element of care

Little information about how engagement of adult siblings in the lives of their brother/sister with a disability develops

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# PARTICIPANTS

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## CURRENT

Questionnaire sent via mail

Collected information on relationship, current and intended responsibilities ,and impression management

Siblings were between the ages of 22 and 35 years

M = 28.2yrs (SD = 2.88 yrs)

## INITIAL

Interviewed siblings, mothers and fathers

Collected information on relationship, responsibilities and adjustment

Siblings were between the ages of 7yrs 2 mths and 14 yrs 7 mths

M = 10yrs 10 mths (SD = 2 yrs)

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# MEASURES

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## CURRENT

Adult Sibling Relationship Questionnaire (Lanthier et al., 1992)

Impression Management Scale (Paulus, 1992)

## INITIAL

Sibling Inventory of Behaviour (Schaefer & Edgerton)

Child Behavior Checklist (Achenbach, 1991)

Hater Self-Perception Scale (Harter, 1985)

Relationship Satisfaction Questionnaire (McHale & Gamble, 1989)

Aggression Questionnaire (McHale & Gamble, 1989)

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# INFORMATION ABOUT PARTICIPANTS

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N = 39 (61% of potential pool)

Age range of brother/sister with Down syndrome: 22 -34 years (M = 27.58)

24 were female and 15 were male (no differences in age)

22 were the in same sex dyad and 17 were in an opposite sex dyad

21 were older than their brother/sister with Down syndrome

17 were younger than their brother/sister with Down syndrome

(those who were younger were also younger)

No difference between those who participated and those who did not on earlier measures of interest

Neither sibling age nor age of individual with Down syndrome was correlated with relationship measures

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# FREQUENCY OF CONTACT

	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
Daily	12.8%	12.8%
Weekly	46.1%	58.9%
Monthly	10.3%	69.2%
Twice a year	20.5%	89.7%
Yearly	5.1%	94.8%
Less than once a year	2.6%	97.4%

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# RESULTS

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Siblings' reports of their relationship suggested them to be:

moderately warm ( $M = 3.25$ )

with low levels of conflict ( $M = 1.80$ )

There were no differences on measures of Warmth or Conflict between:

brothers and sisters

younger or older siblings

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# ADULT SIBLING RELATIONSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

## WARMTH

Acceptance

Admiration

*Affection*\*\*

Emotional Support\*

Instrumental Support

*Intimacy*\*\*

Knowledge\*\*

## CONFLICT

Antagonism

*Competition*\*\*

Dominance\*\*

Quarrelling

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# CURRENT AND EARLIER RELATIONSHIP MEASURES

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## CURRENT WARMTH

Involvement ( $\rho = .36, p = .018$ )

Total satisfaction with relationship ( $\rho = .42, p = .008$ )

## CURRENT CONFLICT

Avoidance ( $\rho = .41, p = .01$ )

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# INTENTION TO CARE

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Intend to provide direct care in the future:

Yes: 59.0%

No: 38.5%

Intend to provide indirect care in the future:

Yes: 71.8%

No: 25.6%

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# INTENTION TO CARE

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Intention to care unrelated to reports of current  
Warmth or Conflict

There were no significant associations between  
previous measures of relationship or sibling  
adjustment and intention to care

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# LIMITATIONS

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No information from other person in the relationship

No measure of current behaviour/adaptive behaviours of the individual with Down syndrome

Understanding of the meaning(s) respondents attributed to the terms 'direct' and 'indirect' in relation to care

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