

# NLS Surveys: Congratulations on 50 years

R. Kelly Raley

University of Texas -- Austin



## Features of the NLS data

Population based sample

Longitudinal Design

Broad coverage of major domains – family, education, health, labor force

Integrates survey and administrative data

Repeated Cohort Design

## The Benefits of Postsecondary Enrollment

Decades of discoveries made possible by NLS

Kane & Rouse NLS 72 w/ postsecondary transcripts

wage benefits to two- and four-year enrollment, even when don't earn a degree

Brewer, Eide, and Ehrenberg – NLS 72  
Black and Smith – NLSY 1979

Elite College attendance associated with wage premium, may be increasing over time.

Brand & Xie – NLSY 1979

College attendance may benefit those who are least likely to attend the most

Roska & Levey – NLSY 1979

Occupationally specific degrees associated with higher occupational status immediately after enrollment, less growth over time.

Patrick – NLSY 97w/ IPEDS

For-profit institutions: two-year degrees no income gain, four-year degrees equivalent to non-profit.

## The Benefits of Postsecondary Enrollment

Growing Use of Administrative data – the College Scorecard

School costs, graduation rates, salaries after graduation

What percentage of students earns no more than a typical high school graduate?

Are for-profit institutions as good as non-profit private or public universities?

Is the NLS being replaced by administrative data?

## The Benefits of Postsecondary Enrollment

What does the NLS continue to add?

Includes all students, not just receiving federal aid

Individual experiences, not cohorts

Pre-college educational experiences, family background, expectations for the future

Broad context: marriage, childbearing, health

## The Benefits of Postsecondary Enrollment

NLSY Postsecondary Transcript Study & Network – supported by NICHD

Postsecondary Transcript collection, coding, analysis

University of Texas (PI: Muller)

University of Wisconsin

National Opinion Research Center

Ohio State University

Postsecondary Research Network - projects

Family background and college GPA and field of study

College Processes - Remediation

Adult outcomes – health, family, labor force



## The Benefits of Postsecondary Enrollment

NLSY Postsecondary Transcript Study & Network

### Early Findings

Jessa Valentine (University of Wisconsin)      Update of Kane and Rouse

Associates and Bachelor's Degrees both associated with higher wages.

Credits earned at two- and four-year institutions are associated with increased earnings among those who do not earn a degree, only for women.

Melissa Humphries (University of Texas)

Educational gradient in health emerges early in adulthood

Degree attainment, even two-year degrees, have significant positive association with self-reported health.

Among those who do not obtain a degree, years of enrollment is positively associated with self-reported health.

## The Benefits of Postsecondary Enrollment

### Educational Gradients in Divorce

- \* Education provides skills to improve mate selection and communication
- \* Education signals to others (employers, potential spouses) desirable qualities
- \* Degree completion selects for people with persistence and other qualities that stabilize marriage

### Data

NLSY 1997 and Postsecondary Transcripts N= 3049 who had completed a high school degree and had married

Measures – Enrollment, Degree attainment, number of credits earned





## The Benefits of Postsecondary Enrollment

Table 1. Comparison of Survey-Based and Transcript-Based Measures of Education at Marriage

	Survey	Transcript
High School	33.2	32.8
Some College	38.9	41.9
Associate's Degree	6.2	4.3
Bachelor's Degree	21.7	21.1
Mean 2-year credits	10.1	10.6
Mean 4-year credits	32.4	34.0
N (Persons)	3049	2423

About 5 percent over-report attainment, 6 percent underreport

Correlation for credits earned: 4-year  $r=.86$  2-year  $r=.68$

## The Benefits of Postsecondary Enrollment

Table 2. Estimates from Discrete-Time Proportional Hazard Model Predicting Marital Dissolution, Missing Transcript Data Imputed

	Model 0	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Education (High School)				
Some College	-0.151	-0.122	-0.024	0.000
Associates Degree	-0.257	-0.160	0.103	0.128
College Grad	-1.071**	-1.002**	-0.328	-0.288
Number of 2-year credits (X10)	-0.014		-0.021	-0.019
Number of 4-year credits (X10)	-0.085**		-0.074**	-0.070**
HS GPA	-0.343**			-0.075
HS College-Prep Math	-0.298**			0.025
ASVAB score (1997)	-0.005**			-0.002
N=9672 Person Years				

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## The Benefits of Postsecondary Enrollment

### Preliminary Conclusions

- \* Education provides skills to improve mate selection and communication
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- \* Degree completion selects for people with persistence and other qualities that stabilize marriage

Much more can be done with these data

Processes leading to marital disruption

Rich measures of postsecondary experiences

Geographic identifiers to identify potential instrumental variables

## Repeated Cohort Design

Essential for studying social change

1. Can describe social processes and how they have changed across cohorts

e.g. Sweeney 2002 American Sociological Review

2. New samples across cohorts incorporates immigrant groups

## Conclusion

NLS has features that make it well suited to addressing a wide range of research questions

Population based sample

Longitudinal Design

Broad coverage of major domains – family, education, health, life course

Integrate administrative data

