North American newspaper headlines in 1992 and 1993 gave the concept of "family" a great deal of coverage. The debate over "family values," the Family Leave Bill in the U.S. Congress, and the furor over "Nannygate" converged together to put the spotlight on families and related topics.

Family studies (sometimes called family science) is a broad category, covering diverse fields of study and practice such as family therapy, family sociology, family psychology, social work, population studies, anthropology, family law, and other disciplines. Those who seek information on families and family studies can look in a variety of places, including several CD-ROM databases. This article will give an overview of available CD-ROM resources which provide information on family studies. While there is some overlap among the resources described here, these products each have a unique focus, and thus cannot easily be compared directly with each other.

The family genealogical researcher will find a plethora of CD-ROM resources available, such as those published by Automated Archives in Orem, Utah, but these will not be covered in this article.

The term "family" will be broadly defined here. It will include the traditional view of the family (two parents and one or more children) as well as nontraditional definitions (blended families, single parents, etc.).

**PSYCLIT**

PsycLIT, the CD-ROM version of PsycINFO and Psychological Abstracts, is an excellent resource for family studies on CD-ROM. It is a hefty database both in size and price. (It contains over 500,000 records, and over 40,000 records per year are added to the database.) PsycLIT is an international database covering all aspects of psychology, including topics related to family studies like family therapy, child development, and marriage counseling. PsycLIT has a tutorial and the present. Fields for journal article records include article title, author(s), institutional affiliation of first author, journal name, language, year of publication, abstract, key phrase, descriptors, classification code(s), population subset, and age group. Fields for book chapters and book records include book title, chapter title, author(s), institutional affiliation of first author, corporate author, publication information, year of publication, series title, table of contents, audience type code, document type code, and reprint notes.

A subset of PsycLIT, called ClinPSYC, includes subjects primarily related to clinical psychology and psychotherapy. ClinPSYC on CD-ROM is distributed by SilverPlatter Information and CD Plus. PsycLIT is published by the American Psychological Association together with SilverPlatter Information. It is available on both IBM and Macintosh platforms. A regular subscription costs $4495 per year, while a multiuser subscription costs $6750 per year. Subscribers to the print version of Psychological Abstracts can subscribe for the reduced fees of $3745 (single-user workstation) or $5625 (multiuser).

**NATASHA**

The National Archive on Sexuality, Health, and Adolescence (NATASHA)
contains the descriptions and data from 82 important research studies related to health, sexuality, and fertility in the United States, with special reference to adolescents. These studies were conducted over a 40-year period (although most come from the 1970s and early 1980s), and contain over 40,000 variables. It may be purchased for $295.

The data in NATASHA can be accessed in several different ways. The user can browse through the study summaries to get a taste of the studies in this database. Or, one can search the variable directory by topic, keyword, study, or type (such as attitudes, behaviors, intentions, etc.). One can also perform immediate cross-tabulations using different variables to produce tables of data. Finally, one can export selected data for later use in a microcomputer or mainframe statistical program such as SPSS.

The basic record in NATASHA's database consists of the following field information: study number, title, principal investigator(s), number of variables, number of respondents (broken down by gender, race, and age), a brief abstract, and a list of the variables in the study.

Representative of the contents of NATASHA are the following titles:

- 1976 U.S. National Survey of Young Women
- 1973 Madison, Wisconsin Study of Premarital Sexuality Among Young People: Students
- 1973-1976 New York City Study of the Social and Demographic Consequences of Teenage Childbearing

NATASHA is in many ways a useful tool for sociological or related studies dealing with adolescence and sexuality. The documentation and online help screens, combined with the easy-to-use menu-driven search engine (KAware from Knowledge Access), make using the software a relatively painless task. Even those without a strong statistical background will be able to browse through the data and compile simple cross-tabulations. However, analysis or interpretation of the data is another matter altogether. Spurious interpretations can easily result if the user is not careful to compile his or her data sets using the standard rules of statistical analysis. NATASHA in the hands of a statistical neophyte could easily prove the axiom, "Lies, damned lies, and statistics."

Another warning for potential users of this CD-ROM: Much of the data is relatively old, and thus will have to be used with caution. For example, some of the surveys that deal with abortion were taken before the 1973 legalization of abortion, and may not be totally relevant in a post-Roe versus Wade context. An update consisting of over 40 post-NATASHA data sets will be available from Sociometrics in early 1994.

**AMERICAN FAMILY DATA ARCHIVE (AFDA)**

AFDA is a collection of 36 data sets (developed from 14 major studies) on marriage and family life in the United States. The information in AFDA is primarily demographic, sociological, and psychological in nature. AFDA covers such issues as child care, employment, marital disruption, and child custody. The data sets can be searched using the KAware2 retrieval software, and selected variables may be extracted and exported into a variety of statistical software programs.


The user's manual for AFDA is clearly-written and informative. It contains installation instructions, hardware specifications, descriptions of the actual studies, and definitions of the variable names.

Like NATASHA, AFDA is a useful tool for researchers, policymakers, teachers, and students. It is produced by Sociometrics Corporation with funds provided by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development and by the National Science Foundation. AFDA runs on both IBM and Macintosh computers, and may be purchased for $950 for the DOS version with search and retrieval and data extracting software; $850 for the Macintosh version without such software.

**CROSS-CULTURAL CD**

SilverPlatter introduced a set of CD-ROM databases in 1989 called Cross-Cultural CD, consisting of five volumes of information dealing with society and the family. These full-text files were extracted from the Human Relations Area Files, and cover life in 60 different cultures throughout the world during the 19th and 20th centuries. All records are in English.

The volumes currently available deal with Human Sexuality and Marriage (Volume 1), Family, Crime, and Social Problems (Volume 2), Old Age, and Death and Dying (Volume 3), and Childhood and Adolescence (Volume 4). Socialization and Education (Volume 5) to be released in 1994, will cover Religious Beliefs and Religious Practices.

Cross-Cultural CD is not nearly as easy to search as some of the other
SOCIAL WORK ABSTRACTS PLUS

The National Association of Social Workers produces two databases that are available on one disc. Social Work Abstracts Plus, through SilverPlatter. The first database, Social Work Abstracts, covers journal articles and doctoral dissertations from 1977 to the present. More than 430 journals are indexed, and include areas such as aging, drug abuse, family and child welfare, social problems, the social work profession, and social work theory. The second database, The Register of Clinical Social Workers, is a directory of clinical social workers in the United States. It includes name and address information, as well as employer, education, employment history, and type of practice.

Social Work Abstracts Plus does not offer a thesaurus, so searches must be performed either free-text or through the index. Searchable fields include the abstract, address of the first author, name(s) of the author(s), classification code, dissertation affiliation, descriptors, source (usually the journal title and bibliographic data), publication year, and title of the article. The dissertation records, many of which come from Dissertation Abstracts, do not contain the “publication year” field or the “source” field, but are useful nonetheless. Most of the article abstracts come directly from the original journal, and some records contain no abstract at all. All citations are taken from English-language journals.

The Register of Clinical Social Workers portion of this CD-ROM is a useful tool for finding clinical social workers in a particular geographical area or social workers who work with specific problems. (Clinical social workers usually must have an advanced degree in social work, often must work under state licensure, and usually perform various forms of family therapy in a private practice setting.) The Register contains the following fields: Academy of Certified Social Workers membership status, address, current place of employment, certification or licensure, educational background (including degree granted, date granted, and the institution granting the degree), previous employment, practice code (individual therapy, couples, groups, etc.), and specialization (family violence, sexual dysfunction, etc.).

Social Work Abstracts Plus contains over 25,000 records, and adds 2,500 records per year. It is updated semi-annually, and is produced by SilverPlatter (in association with the National Association of Social Workers, Inc.). The annual cost for a single-user subscription is $1095, and for a multi-user subscription, $1643.

Social Work Abstracts Plus uses the SPIRS software interface, and can only be used on IBM (or IBM clone) microcomputers.

SOCIOFILE

Sociofile, produced by SilverPlatter in conjunction with Sociological Abstracts, is the premier CD-ROM database for sociology. It includes journal articles published in Sociological Abstracts and Social Planning/Policy & Development Abstracts (SOPODA) from 1974 to the present, as well as about 7,000 dissertations published since 1980. The subjects represented in sociofile include urban sociology, sociology of knowledge, demography, gerontology, familial studies, community development, studies in poverty, social planning, social welfare, and social psychology. The great majority of articles are in English, but many other languages are represented as well.

The fields in sociofile records include the document title, the author(s), institutional affiliation, journal name, hardcopy availability, notes, document type, language, country of publication, year of publication, abstract, and several descriptor fields. Two very useful fields are Availability, which allows the user to determine document delivery possibilities, and the Notes field, which contains miscellaneous (but helpful) information.

Sociofile has a print and online thesaurus, which means that searches can be more precise. It contains about 175,000 records, adds about 10,000 records per year, and is updated tri-annually. Sociofile also offers an online tutorial. A subscription can be purchased for $1950 per year for a single-user workstation, and $2995 per year for a multiuser setup. Sociofile uses the excellent SPIRS search and retrieval software interface, and is available for both IBM and Macintosh computers.
POPLINE
POPLINE is a unique database containing over 150,000 citations and abstracts related to population and demographics, family planning, and family policy issues. The database contains data gleaned from journal articles, books, technical reports, audiovisuals, legislative documents, ephemeris, patents, newspaper articles, theses, and unpublished papers. It is maintained by the Population Information Program at The Johns Hopkins University in conjunction with Princeton University's Population Index. Production of POPLINE is funded by the United States Agency for International Development.

The Family Doctor CD-ROM...is the next best thing to having Marcus Welby, M.D., in your home or office.

Using SilverPlatter's SPIRS search software, the user can look for information in the following fields: abstract, address, author, country of publication, entry month, language, notes, publication type, source, title (in English as well as in the original language), year of publication, and subject fields. A print thesaurus is available, but it is not yet searchable online. Documentation for POPLINE is thorough yet concise, with helpful ideas for search strategies clearly presented. The documentation also includes three appendices that list the various languages used in POPLINE (75 different languages, from Afrikaans to Welsh), various publication types (listed earlier), and all of the stopwords used in the database.

A subscription to POPLINE can be arranged through SilverPlatter for $790 per year (for a single user) or $1,185 for multiple users. POPLINE can be used on either an IBM or a Macintosh platform.

FAMILY RESOURCES DATABASE
An important print and online reference tool that is due to be published on CD-ROM by the end of 1993 is the Family Resources Database, also known as the Inventory of Marriage and Family Literature. This database will be distributed by DataTRAQ International in conjunction with the National Council on Family Relations.

The Family Resources Database (in its present form as an online database available through Dialog and BRS) contains over 120,000 citations from books, journal articles, dissertations, government publications, and unpublished research. It selectively indexes these materials from a wide spectrum of disciplines, including psychology, education, sociology, health sciences, law, theology, anthropology, economics, and social work.

THE FAMILY DOCTOR
The Family Doctor CD-ROM (list price: $79.95) is the next best thing to having Marcus Welby, M.D., in your home or office. Written by Dr. Allan Bruckheim and published by Creative Multimedia Corporation, The Family Doctor is a large compendium of medical information written for a lay audience. It is available for either the IBM or Macintosh environments, but offers no written documentation.

The Family Doctor contains answers to 2,500 commonly asked health questions, information about 1,600 prescription medications, 300 color illustrations, and an elaborate illustrated guide to the human anatomy. Its DiscPassage software interface is an easy-to-use menu-driven system that allows even the novice to find information on almost any ailment. The Family Doctor is a useful and informative tool, but remember: nothing can ever replace your real family doctor!

OTHER DATABASES
Other CD-ROM databases may also be useful in searching for information about families. For example, our library uses ERIC for educationally-oriented family information, and EBSCO's Health Source for health or medically-oriented data. We also use UMI's Dissertation Abstracts and EBSCO's Academic Abstracts to complement our CD-ROM collection. In addition, we subscribe to the CD-ROM version of our local newspaper (Dialog's LOS ANGELES TIMES OnDisc) for local and current information.

SUMMARY
The databases described in this article are appropriate for organizations that serve clients researching a variety of topics that fall under the category of family studies. In addition, some individuals (teachers, researchers, etc.) may benefit from purchasing or subscribing to some of the resources listed here.

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