November, 2008

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your continued participation in our research on the health and well-being of young adults. Your time and experience greatly contributes to the knowledge that researchers and clinicians use to enhance the lives of children and young adults. In appreciation for your time and participation, we are providing you with a brief summary of the results of the data gathered approximately 4 years ago.

**Background**

Your participation in this research effort actually began in approximately 1990, at which time the project was called the Minnesota Competence Enhancement Project. The study compared two large groups of youth: one group showed signs of having Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) during childhood, whereas the other group did not show signs of ADHD during childhood.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder has stepped into the limelight in recent years as a common but problematic health issue among American youth; estimates of ADHD in the general population range from 3%-5% of school-age children, with the disorder consistently being more common in males by a ratio of 4:1 in community settings.

We conducted a follow-up version of that original study about 4 years ago to see how those individuals with and without a history of ADHD symptoms during childhood would compare on various aspects of life as young adults. We wondered “How do the two groups differ, if at all, in terms of progress in school, social life, and health and well-being?”.

**Summary of Findings**

Results from the follow-up survey that we conducted show that the two groups, on average, differ in some respects but do not differ in other ways. In regard to general life functioning, such as relationships with parents, self-esteem (how we see ourselves), and interpersonal relationships (how we get along with others), the two groups look very similar as young adults. The only category of general life functioning that did reveal a difference was in leadership; those who did not show signs of ADHD during childhood report slightly more leadership characteristics as young adults than those who had ADHD symptoms as a child.
In the areas of school performance and mental health, we did find some significant differences between the two groups. Approximately 67% of those without signs of childhood ADHD reported good or excellent school performance, as compared to 44% of those with signs of childhood ADHD. Similarly, those without signs of childhood ADHD were slightly more likely to graduate from high school. Levels of anxiety were quite similar for both groups, though depression was slightly higher for those with childhood ADHD symptoms.

We also found group differences concerning alcohol or drug problems. A lower percentage of young adults without signs of childhood ADHD reported either an alcohol or marijuana drug problem compared to those with signs of childhood ADHD. Those without signs of childhood ADHD also had significantly lower rates of regular tobacco use. These findings are very consistent with the results reported by other research groups in the U.S. who have studied this issue.

We thank you again for your participation in our research; it is the efforts from people such as you that make this important work possible. If you have any questions about these results or the study, please feel free to contact the director of the study, Ken Winters, Ph.D. at winte001@umn.edu or at 612-273-9815.