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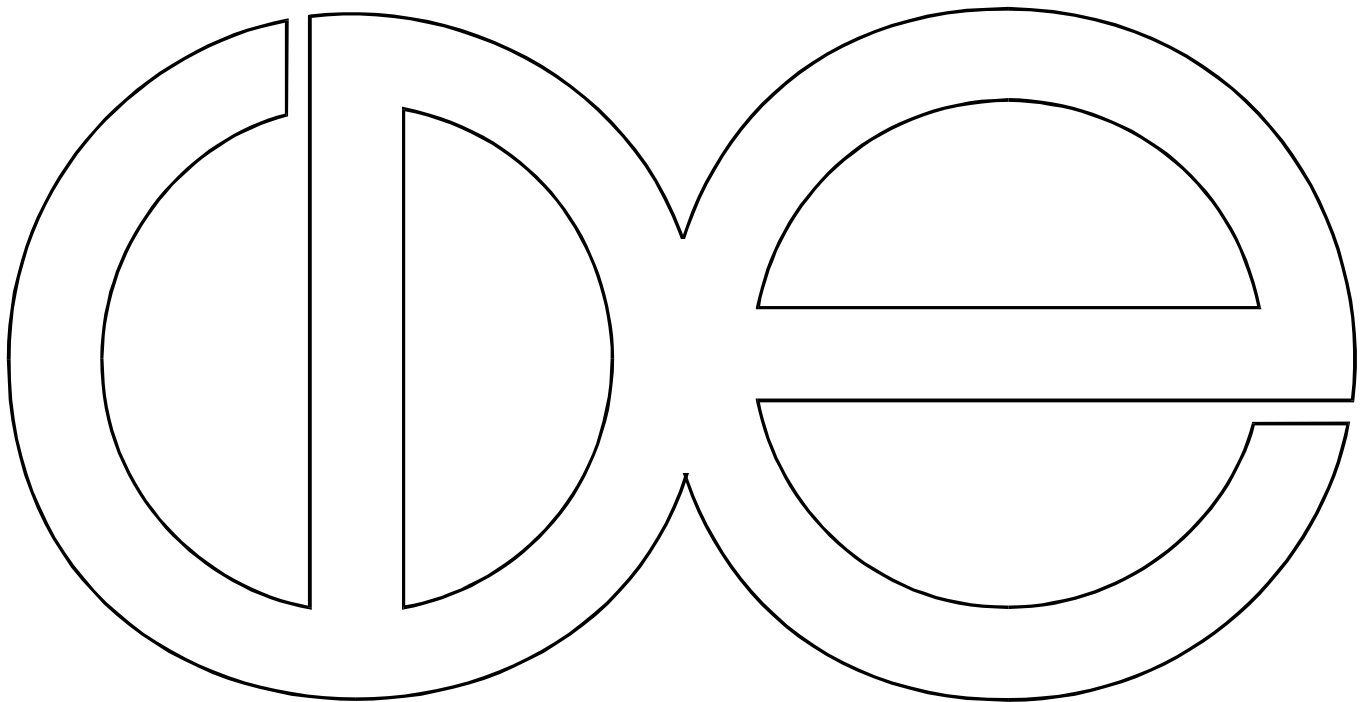
**Family Roles and Well-Being During the Middle Life Course**

**Nadine F. Marks**

**Larry L. Bumpass**

**Hey Jung Jun**

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RUNNING HEAD: Family roles and well-being

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Nadine F. Marks

Larry L. Bumpass

Hey Jung Jun

University of Wisconsin-Madison

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## Family Roles and Well-Being During the Middle Life Course

As we embark upon the early years of a new millennium, considerable consternation and debate about what is happening to the family as a social institution in the United States and elsewhere continues (Waite, 2000). During the 20<sup>th</sup> century family demography charted historic changes in rates of mortality, marriage, fertility, divorce, remarriage, and household composition (Bumpass, 1990). In contrast to 1900, today both men and women live significantly longer, a smaller proportion of the adult life course is spent married, a higher proportion of adults cohabit before marriage or in lieu of marriage, a higher proportion of marriages end in divorce, fewer remarriages follow a divorce, fewer children are born to each woman, a higher proportion of the population lives in a single-person household, and a higher proportion of adulthood is spent with living parents over age 65 (and at risk of dependency due to frailty and/or chronic illness) (Bumpass, 1990; Bumpass & Sweet, 1989a; 1989b; Bumpass, Sweet, & Martin, 1989; Castro-Martin & Bumpass, 1989; Cherlin, 1992; Glick, 1988; Schoen et al., 1985; Schoen & Weinick, 1993; Watkins, Menken, & Bongaarts, 1987). All of these changes have led some scholars to proclaim the decline if not the demise of the traditional family (Popenoe, 1988, 1993; Skolnick, 1991). Others have suggested that while, indeed, the American family is changing, this dynamism is nothing new, but rather a continuation of long-term trends and patterns (Bane, 1976). Families in 21st century America are increasingly diverse in structure and process, yet they still constitute a resilient social institution, which continues to provide an important emotional and economic foundation for the life course of adults as well as children (Stacey, 1990, 1993; Waite, 2000).

Life experience within family roles, including the partner role, the parent role, and the adult child role vis-a-vis aging parents, has been previously documented to be a significant determinant of the well-being of men and women (Ross, Mirowsky, & Goldsteen, 1990). Yet the dynamism of family change currently in process has considerably altered expectations for these family roles and family role enactments. A life-course structural symbolic interactionist theoretical perspective (Stryker & Statham, 1985; Wells & Stryker, 1988) would predict such changes in role meaning and role expectations could lead to changing consequences of occupying these roles for adult well-being. For example, marital partners are now struggling with changed and sometimes conflicting expectations regarding women's and men's responsibilities regarding marital emotional and instrumental support (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Divorce is a more normative potential outcome for contemporary marriage cohorts if marital expectations are not met. Many marriages are remarriages, where one or both partners come to the institution with a history of disenchantment or at least, disappointment (Cherlin, 1992). Cohabitation has grown from a rare and deviant behavior to the majority experience among cohorts of marriageable age (Bumpass & Lu, 2000; Bumpass & Sweet, 1989a).

Parenthood is no longer necessarily a role shared with a single partner across the life course (Bumpass & Sweet, 1989b; Cherlin, 1992). Research on intergenerational relations has documented the continuing emotional and instrumental ties that characterize parenting for children ages 19 and older, as well as children ages 18 and younger (Hogan, Eggebeen, & Clogg, 1993; Rossi and Rossi, 1990; Marks, 1995). Parenthood responsibilities are more often shared by fathers and mothers, and caring for children is more often juggled with work and other caregiving responsibilities by contemporary women and men (Marks, 1996a).

Experience in the adult child role vis-a-vis aging parents has been less well studied, possibly a holdover from the extended period in family studies when structural-functionalism was the dominant theoretical paradigm--emphasizing the relative isolation of the elderly from their grown children (Parsons, 1942). One exception is the growing literature on caregiving to aging parents (e.g., Brody, 1990; Stone et al., 1987; Marks, 1996b; 1998). However, again, as families become more vertical (i.e., more typically comprised of persons from three or more generations) and less horizontal (i.e., more typically comprised of fewer persons from the same generation, such as siblings and cousins) in structure, continuing relations across generations, and interdependency across generations becomes even more common (Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Hogan, Eggebeen, & Clogg, 1993; Cooney & Uhlenberg, 1992). Across the middle adult years men and women are more and more likely to have living parents who may provide them with varying degrees of emotional, instrumental, and financial support and/or whom they watch gradually, or sometimes suddenly, decline in health, and become potentially more dependent upon them (Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Watkins, Mencken, & Bongaarts, 1987).

The first aim of this chapter is to use data from the primary respondent sample (N=3,032, 1,318 men, 1,714 women) of the National Survey of Midlife in the United States (MIDUS), 1995 (see Chapter 1, this volume, for more design details) to describe how the distribution of the adult population occupying marital/partner, parenthood, and adult child (in relationship to older parents' health and mortality) roles varies across ages 25-74 for contemporary U.S. men and women. Additionally, we examine how marital status, parental status, and adult child status are currently associated with physical, mental, and social well-being, and whether these associations differ across gender and age groups (young adults ages 25-39 representing birth cohorts from

1956 to 1970, midlife adults ages 40-59 representing birth cohorts from 1936 to 1955, and young-old adults ages 60 to 74 representing birth cohorts from 1920 to 1935). The MIDUS data offer a particularly rich resource for the investigation of these issues, since its development by an interdisciplinary team resulted in the inclusion of expansive and innovative measurement of health, psychological, and social constructs for a large representative sample of American adults across a wide adult age span. Sampling weights that correct for selection probabilities and nonresponse allow this sample to match the composition of the U.S. population on age, sex, race, and education.

#### Marital/Partnership Status during the Middle Life Course

While there has been a major upheaval in the stability of marriage, most Americans continue to develop partnerships during the middle adult years. Marriage now, compared to fifty years ago, is occurring at older ages for both women and men (Schoen et al., 1985; Schoen & Weinick, 1993). Ever more typically, contemporary marriages occur after a period of cohabitation (Bumpass & Sweet, 1989a; Bumpass & Lu, 2000). While a high proportion of marriages occurred prior to age 25 for older cohorts, younger cohorts are increasingly waiting until after age 25 to marry. Additionally, across the middle life course, many adults are married more than once (Schoen et al., 1985; Schoen & Weinick, 1993).

Table 1 describes the distribution of number of marriages reported across the sample of MIDUS respondents aged 25-74 in 1995 (weighted distribution estimates here and in other descriptive tables are provided to estimate U.S. population distributions). Overall, only about one in ten women and one in eight men reported having never been married when we considered the entire population at these ages. About two-thirds of the population in this age range has been

married only once. A little over one in five adults these ages report two or more marriages.

[Table 1 about here]

A further examination of current marital status by age provided in Table 2 indicates that while a little more than one in five women at young adult ages 25-39 has never been married (5.8% cohabiting and 14.7% noncohabiting) and just under one in four young adult men has never been married (7.1% cohabiting and 15.7% noncohabiting), by midlife ages 40-59, only about one in twenty American women and men have not tried marriage at least once. For all the rhetoric about a “retreat from marriage,” Americans remain a “marrying people,” much more so than some other Western Europeans (Popenoe, 1988).

[Table 2 about here]

Considered in cross-sectional, one-point-in-time perspective, we find that about half of young and midlife adult men and women are in first marriages. At young adult ages, another one in ten men and women are in second or higher order marriages. By the midlife years, for these birth cohorts who have moved through young adulthood during a period of relatively high divorce rates, a full one in five women and one in four men is remarried. By contrast, for the young-old age group, representing somewhat older birth cohorts that historically experienced lower divorce rates during the young adult ages when most divorce is most likely, only about one in eight women and one in five men is remarried.

Cohabitation has become a much more common type of union in the last few decades (Bumpass & Sweet, 1989a). About one in ten young adult MIDUS respondents reported living in a cohabiting, marriage-like union. By midlife these rates had reduced by half to about one in twenty for both men and women. Cohabitation was seldom reported by young-old adults.

At young adult ages, 17.3% of women (5.6% cohabiting, 11.7% noncohabiting) reported being separated or divorced. At midlife for these birth cohorts, separated and divorced rates had risen to include almost one in four women (3% cohabiting, 20.2% noncohabiting). By older ages for these birth cohorts, about one in ten women reported being separated or divorced (almost exclusively noncohabiting).

Men's rates of reporting separated or divorced status are somewhat lower than women's rates due mainly to their quicker propensity to remarry if divorced (Schoen & Weinick, 1993). For example, in the MIDUS sample, about 11.2% of young adult men report being separated or divorced (2.3% cohabiting, 8.9% noncohabiting). At midlife ages about 15.5% of men are separated or divorced (3.6% cohabiting, 11.9% noncohabiting). At older ages about 7.6% of young old men report being separated or divorced (almost exclusively noncohabiting).

The prevalence of widowhood at young adult ages is extremely low (note: this is a cross-sectional profile here, so remarried widows will be included in the remarried category). At midlife the rates begin to increase for women (4.4%), but not for men; at older adult ages about one in four women is a widow and about one in twenty men is a widower.

### Marital/Partnership Status and Well-being

Marital status and its association with well-being has been an important topic of study in the family studies literature. Historically, being married has been associated with better mental health than being unmarried (e.g., Booth & Amato, 1991; Glenn, 1975; Gove, Hughes, & Style, 1983; Gove, Style, & Hughes, 1990; Menaghan & Lieberman, 1986; Pearlin & Johnson, 1977). However, as marriage has become more delayed, cohabitation more common, divorce more common, and a period of single living has become more typical and acceptable for young adults,



there has been some speculation and even some evidence that marriage, per se, may have become less important for adult happiness (e.g., Glenn & Weaver, 1988; Lee, Seccombe, & Shehan, 1991). Overall, however, population research continues to suggest that marriage is associated with less psychological distress for both men and women (e.g., Marks, 1996c; Marks & Lambert, 1998).

Previous research on marriage and well-being often has been limited, however, in that 1) it has seldom included important contemporary categories reflecting the full range of marital/partnership status such as remarried and cohabitor to contrast with first marriage status (Ross, 1995), 2) it has seldom examined age differences in the importance of marriage for well-being (e.g., young adult vs. midlife adult vs. older adult differences in the influence of marriage on well-being), and 3) it has often been limited to studying only depression and/or life satisfaction, and sometimes health, as outcomes.

To address these gaps, we used the MIDUS data to examine how marital/partner status might be related to four dimensions of well-being: negative affect (dysphoria), positive psychological wellness, global self-assessed health, and generativity. Examining this range of psychological, physical and social well-being is congruent with the multidimensional approach to considering positive human health that was first suggested by the World Health Organization in 1946 (i.e., health defined as not just the “absence of disease,” but as “a state of complete physical, mental, and social-well-being”). A similar expansive conceptualization of health was further developed by the MIDMAC Network, which chose to focus on physical health, mental health, and social responsibility as three key criteria for defining successful midlife development.

Examining dysphoria allows us to examine an indicator of negative affect or

psychological dysfunction--the most typically studied aspect of mental health, thereby building upon and replicating previous work. Negative affect, or dysphoria, was operationalized with a 6-item, highly reliable scale ( $\alpha = .87$ ) developed for MIDUS (see Mroczek & Kolarz, 1998, for additional details on reliability and validity). Respondents were queried: "During the past 30 days, how much of the time did you feel...1) so sad nothing could cheer you up? 2) nervous? 3) restless or fidgety? 4) hopeless? 5) that everything was an effort? 6) worthless?" Response categories ranged from 1=none of the time, to 5=all of the time. (See Appendix for descriptives for all variables used in the analyses.)

Positive psychological wellness is much less typically studied, yet it represents an important related, yet distinct, domain of mental health (Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Much previous work studying more positive psychological well-being has focused singularly on either happiness or life satisfaction. However, attention to these outcomes has arisen from a largely atheoretical basis. Addressing this gap in studying psychological wellness among adults, Ryff and her colleagues have used adult development theories to guide the development and validation of six new psychological wellness scales. Three-item versions of these scales were included in the MIDUS. For this investigation we created a psychological wellness index ( $\alpha = .81$ ) by summing across the 18 Ryff items that assessed autonomy (e.g., "I have confidence in my own opinions, even if they are different from the way most other people think"), environmental mastery (e.g., "I am good at managing the responsibilities of daily life"), positive relations with others (e.g., "People would describe me as a giving person, willing to share my time with others"), self-acceptance (e.g., "When I look at the story of my life, I am pleased with how things have turned out so far"), purpose in life (e.g., "Some people wander aimlessly through life, but I

am not one of them”), and personal growth (e.g., “For me, life has been a continuous process of learning, changing, and growth”; see Ryff, 1989; Ryff & Keys, 1995, for more details on reliability and validity).

Global physical health was measured using a standard one-item self-report item: “In general, would you say your physical health is poor (1), fair (2), good (3), very good (4), or excellent (5)?” This one item has been shown to have high predictive validity for future mortality and morbidity in a wide range of studies (Idler & Benyamini, 1997).

The most atypical well-being outcome we considered is a measure of social well-being: generativity. Erikson’s (1950) developmental theory suggests that during middle adulthood the most important developmental task is to engage in activity that extends benefit beyond the self and supports the growth and development of others. This often includes support offered to one’s own children, but it is conceptually and operationally by no means limited to this. In the context of family roles, we might expect that individuals have a rich opportunity to realize gains in this area of personal development; however, generativity has seldom been previously examined in research on family roles and well-being (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, 1998).

The measure of generativity we used from the MIDUS was adapted from the McAdams generativity scale (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992) by Alice Rossi (see also the chapter by Rossi in this volume). It is a summed index including six items asking respondents: “To what extent does each of the following statements describe you? 1) Others would say that you have made unique contributions to society. 2) You have important skills you can pass along to others. 3) Many people come to you for advice. 4) You feel that other people need you. 5) You have had a good influence on the lives of many people. 6) You like to teach things to people.” (4=a lot,

3=some, 2=a little, 1=not at all;  $\alpha = .84$ ).

Since our aim was to examine gender differences as well as age differences in the influence of marital status on well-being, we carried out our analyses in two steps: a first step included an evaluation of gender differences and a second step examined age differences. Specifically, in the first step for the marital status analyses, to investigate gender differences we estimated models for men and women together, regressing each of the four outcome variables on variables for gender (female=1), age (coded categorically: age1=25-39 years, age3=60-74 years, contrasted with age2=40-59 years), marital status (coded categorically: remarried, cohabiting [any type], formerly married [separated, divorced, widowed, but not cohabiting], never married [not cohabiting], contrasted with first marriage), Gender X Marital Status interaction variables, and demographic control variables for race/ethnicity (dichotomous, black=1), employment status (dichotomous, employed=1), education (coded categorically and then used as a continuous measure: 1=less than high school, 2=high school graduate or GED, 3=some college, and 4=college graduate or more), household income (summed across respondent and spouse and coded continuously in thousands of dollars), parental status (dichotomous, 1=has child), and adult child status (dichotomous, 1=both parents alive and healthy).

While it might have been preferable to examine the marital role, parental role, and adult child role concurrently, due to cell size limitations, we were not able to do this and still allow for the degree of differentiation in categories for each of the roles that we wished to investigate. Therefore, we undertook a separate analysis for each of these roles, and in each analysis, we controlled for the other two family roles in a simplified way. Specifically, in the marital role analysis, we controlled for parental status and adult child status with dichotomous variables as

just noted. For the parental role analysis, we controlled for marital status with a dichotomous variable (first married=1) and adult child status with a dichotomous variable. Likewise, in the adult child role analysis, we controlled for marital status and parental status with dichotomous variables.

In a second step of our marital status analytic sequence, to further examine age differences, we created as many viable contrasts (i.e., Age X Marital Status interaction variables) as we could based on the population distribution of marital status (see Table 2) and examined these contrasts in separate models for men and women. Specifically, we were able to create categories to contrast remarried young adults and remarried older adults with remarried midlife adults, and formerly married young adults and formerly married older adults with formerly married midlife adults. However, because so very few cohabitators exist at older ages, we created only a contrast of young cohabitators with predominantly midlife (plus a few young old) cohabitators; and because so few never married adults exist at older ages we created only a contrast of young never married adults with predominantly midlife (plus a few young old) never married adults.

All models were estimated both with and without population weighting. The overall pattern of results for both weighted and unweighted models were similar; therefore, unweighted results are reported (Winship & Radbill, 1994).

Table 3 provides the results of our analyses of the effects of marital status on well-being. (Figure 1 graphically illustrates predicted well-being scores for population subgroups based on the estimates from models reported in Table 3.) In our preliminary models (first step of analyses) examining men and women together (results not shown in full, but denoted on Table 3 with

superscripts), we found trend level evidence of two gender differences. In the models estimated for both psychological wellness and generativity, it appeared that never married men were reporting less positive psychological wellness and generativity than never married women, when they were both compared to their first married peers. To better view these potential gender differences and to also more easily consider age group differences, we proceeded to estimate a second model for men and women separately adding the age interaction variables. The resulting estimates from these models displayed in Table 3 suggest that noncohabiting formerly married (separated, divorced, or widowed) women and men clearly reported more negative affect than those in a first marriage (the omitted contrast category). There was also suggestive evidence (trend level effect) that remarried men might also experience more negative affect than first married men (the omitted contrast category).

[Table 3 about here]

[Figure 1 about here]

One robust age group difference was also in evidence for both women and men but working in opposite directions: younger never-married women reported significantly more dysphoria than midlife never-married women (the omitted contrast category), however, younger never-married women reported less dysphoria than midlife never-married men.

Considering positive psychological wellness, our results from the analyses of women and men separately suggested that age has an important moderating effect on the influence of marriage on women's wellness. Younger remarried women, younger cohabiting women, and younger formerly married women all reported significantly less psychological wellness than did their marital status counterparts at midlife ages. Among men, in a pattern similar to that found

for dysphoria, we found formerly married and never married men doing more poorly than first marriage men, although the negative effect for younger never married men was significantly less than for midlife never married men.

We found only limited evidence that marital status differences were associated with physical health differences in this sample. In our model estimated for men we found remarried men overall reported poorer health than first married men (although the graph on Figure 1 indicates this global effect is mainly driven by the relatively poorer health of midlife remarried men). There were no significant marital status differences in health for women and no significant age group differences for either men or women.

In terms of generativity, in the separate analyses for women and men, an interesting age pattern for remarried women came into evidence. A trend level age interaction effect suggested that remarried midlife women may experience more generativity than remarried young adult women. There was also trend level evidence that formerly married midlife women were reporting somewhat more feelings of generativity than first married midlife women. Among men, again, never married status (in contrast to first married status) at midlife ages was associated with a trend toward reporting less generativity, but the young adult never married men reported significantly more generativity than the midlife never married men did.

Overall, these results suggest several broad conclusions. First, being in a first marriage is associated with less negative affect than being formerly married at all adult ages. This replicates a relatively consistent finding in the marital status and mental health literature.

Second, there are few robust gender differences in the association between marital status and well-being. The issue of whether and how gender may moderate the association between

marriage and well-being has been hotly contested over the years--beginning with Bernard's (1972) thesis that marriage benefits men more than women. However, more recently evidence from population studies has been shifting to suggest that the benefits of marriage may be more even across women and men than was previously thought to be the case (Marks & Lambert, 1998; Waite, 2000). Our results here are generally congruent with the hypothesis of relatively similar well-being benefits of marriage for women and men.

Third, never-married status contributes to more negative effects for midlife men than it does for younger men. This finding supports other work that suggests that never-married young men are happier now than in the past (Glenn & Weaver, 1988), possibly because a new life course period of semi-autonomous young adult single living is increasingly more normative and less stigmatized (Goldscheider & Waite, 1991). Yet the fact that midlife never-married men are disadvantaged in psychological wellness (a measure that includes many adult development subscales) and possibly generativity in comparison to men in a first marriage suggests that marriage may be particularly important for psychological and social development for men as they age into middle adulthood.

Fourth, younger remarried, cohabiting, and formerly married women experience less psychological wellness than do midlife women in these statuses. Additionally, midlife women who experience nontraditional marital careers that include remarriage or formerly married status may experience some benefits in terms of generativity not experienced by their first married counterparts. These results highlight the importance of considering age effects in family roles and is suggestive that some of the growing life expertise and life management skills that may go along with the midlife years (cf. Brim, 1992) are an asset for women in nontraditional marital



statuses (see also a similar pattern of results reported in Marks & Lambert, 1998).

Finally, differences in physical health for married persons in contrast to single persons are not obvious when viewed cross-sectionally and with many demographic factors controlled. We only found one difference among the married: remarried men reported poorer health than first married men. Marriage has been consistently associated with longevity (Lillard & Panis, 1996), but the findings for health status have been less robust; we found no evidence of a self-assessed health disadvantage of single status.

#### Parental Status Across the Middle Life Course

Although great advances in birth control across the last several decades have increasingly made it possible to separate sex from childbearing, parenthood remains a normative role during the American adult life course (Marks, 1996a). The middle adult years tend to be a time when adults are participating in the development of their children: beginning with infancy and preschool years, moving on to school age years, and finally, to the “launching” phase of young adulthood and older ages.

Table 4 describes the population distribution of parental status for men and women across young, middle, and young old ages. For these analyses we defined parents of a child as: 1) anyone who reported that they had a biological child, and/or 2) anyone who reported that they had any “other children...including step children, adopted children, and any others you helped to raise for at least five years.” (Note: Only about 3.3% of parents, so defined, were exclusively stepparents; in total, only 3.5% of parents, so defined, were exclusively nonbiological parents.) Using this operational definition, among young adults, about three-quarters of women and more than three in five men reported being parents of a child. The age of the youngest child (usually

an indicator of the heaviest level of child dependency) was about evenly split at these young adult ages between having a youngest under age 5 and having a youngest child traversing middle childhood or adolescence. It was rare to report a youngest child age 19 or older at young adult ages.

[Table 4 about here]

By midlife ages we have a relatively good estimate of lifetime incidence of childbearing/childrearing. At ages 40-59 only about 7.4% of women and 9.6% of men from these birth cohorts report not having any children. These rates are also quite similar for the young-old birth cohorts of women and men. Overall, therefore, even with greater control over childbearing, and greater public attitudinal acceptance of childfree adults (Thornton, 1989), the vast majority of adults from these birth cohorts continue to experience a parenting role during their adult life course.

By midlife, a much smaller proportion of women and men has a preschool child, and about half of women and over a third of men report that their youngest child is an adult (age 19 or older). By young-old ages, almost all children are adult children.

#### Parental Status and Well-Being

Overall, the evidence has suggested that parenthood is associated with a greater degree of psychological distress than being childfree (McLanahan & Adams, 1987). However, research on the association between parenthood and well-being is typically missing an important examination of moderating factors, such as age of children and also age of parents, which might influence the pattern of associations (Seltzer & Ryff, 1994; Umberson, 1989; Umberson & Gove, 1989).

Additionally, examinations of parenthood and well-being have typically focused on

psychological distress or life satisfaction as outcomes. An examination of only these outcomes does not provide evidence about whether parenthood might actually have positive effects on other domains of well-being, such as psychological wellness (including here dimensions of adult development such as purpose in life, self-acceptance, positive relations with others, and personal growth) and generativity, which might be posited to be enhanced by the experiences, and even challenges, of parenthood.

In our analyses we aimed to better examine child age differences, parent age differences, and differences that might occur in reports of psychological wellness, generativity, and physical health, as well as psychological dysphoria, in the effects of parenthood among contemporary American parents. Therefore we constructed an analysis similar to the one previously described for marital status contrasts, this time including greater differentiation for parental status. For age contrasts in these analyses, we were again limited by population age composition considerations to the following contrasts: 1) because so few young-old adults have a youngest child under age five, only young adults with children under age five (Age1 X Age of youngest under 5) could be contrasted with midlife adults with children under age five, 2) since so few young-old adults have a youngest child aged six to eighteen years, only young adults with children age six to eighteen (Age1 X Age of youngest 6 to 18) could be contrasted with midlife adults (and a few young-old adults) with a youngest child age six to eighteen, and 3) since so few young adults have a youngest child age 19 and older, only young-old adults with a youngest child age 19 or older (Age3 X Age of youngest 19 or older) could be contrasted with midlife adults (and a few younger adults) with a youngest child age 19 or older.

Table 5 describes the associations between having children of varying ages with well-

being, also by gender and age group. (Figure 2 graphically illustrates predicted well-being scores for population subgroups based on the estimates from models reported in Table 5.) Among women, two significant age group differences were in evidence. While it appears that among midlife women having a youngest aged 5 years or less is associated with more dysphoria than having no children (the omitted parental status contrast category), this effect was significantly reduced for women aged 25-39. Similarly, the association between having school-aged youngest children and having more dysphoria was significantly less among young adult women than midlife women (the omitted age contrast category).

[Table 5 about here]

[Figure 2 about here]

Among men there were no significant age group differences. Overall, there was evidence of well-being benefits of parenthood in contrast to not having children for men. Having only adult children was associated with less dysphoria than having no children.

In terms of psychological wellness, there were clear gender differences in evidence regarding the impact of parenthood on well-being. In our preliminary model estimated across men and women together, we found that for all categories of parenting (in contrast to being childfree), women reported less psychological wellness than men in the comparable parenting category. In the separate analyses by gender that added age group contrasts, we also found that women with a youngest child under age six reported significantly less psychological wellness than women with no children (although a trend level effect suggested that this negative effect might be attenuated for younger women in contrast to midlife women). Additionally, a trend level effect suggested that having school-aged children was associated with less wellness for

women than having no children. However, the age contrasts allowed us to also observe that for women at young old ages, having adult children was associated with significantly greater wellness than at midlife ages (perhaps because children are likely to be even more mature and independent when mothers are at these ages). Figure 3 graphically illustrates how at young old ages, mothers of adult children are actually at a psychological wellness advantage in comparison to women without children.

The models estimated separately for men and women and including an analysis of age group differences revealed that parental status had more implications for women's reports than men's reports of physical health. Younger women reporting a youngest child aged 5 or under reported significantly better physical health than midlife women reporting a youngest aged 5 or under. Across this sample of women, women reporting a youngest child aged 19 or older reported poorer health than women without children. No significant differences in health by parental status were observed among men when they were examined in a separate model with age interaction variables added.

The combined analysis of men and women also revealed two gender differences in the influence of parenthood on generativity. Men with adult children report significantly more generativity than women with adult children, and men with preschool children show evidence of possibly reporting more generativity than women with preschool children.

The analysis of women separately that added age contrasts suggested that midlife women with a preschool-aged youngest child may experience less generativity than midlife women with no children. However, this negative effect appeared to be attenuated for younger women with a preschool-aged youngest child.

Men, by contrast, clearly benefitted in terms of their experience of generativity when they had children in contrast to not having children. The only age group exception was young men whose youngest child was school-aged, and whose predicted generativity scores were lower than those for young men without children (see Figure 2). Overall, our results suggest that in terms of the parent role and well being: First, parenting children is more challenging to the well-being of women than men. This is likely due to the greater emotional and instrumental responsibility for children women internalize and enact (Rossi & Rossi, 1990). Second, the challenge of parenting a preschool-aged child is associated with more negative mental health consequences, but better physical health and generativity reports for women at midlife ages than young adult ages. These findings highlight the importance of considering age differences. They also illustrate how a family role can have costs and benefits at the same time, such that examining only one dimension of well-being (e.g., dysphoria), we would miss the complexity of the story.

Third, having only adult children in contrast to no children is associated with increased psychological wellness for men and young-old women. Additionally, parenthood is particularly important in contributing to men's experience of generativity. These findings again illustrate the importance of considering different age periods of childrearing when considering the association of parenthood with well-being (Seltzer & Ryff, 1994; Umberson, 1989). They also demonstrate the significant benefits for development that parenting has for men. The finding regarding parenthood and generativity among men provides convergent support from population data for a finding that has previously been suggested in prior psychological research with more limited samples (McAdams & de St. Aubin, 1992, 1998). These results overall also suggest that a monolithic examination of parenthood and its association with only one dimension of well-being-

-psychological distress--is likely to miss the benefits as well as costs of parenthood for men as well as women.

#### Adults and their Aging Parents Across the Middle Life Course

An important part of adult life is spent now in relationship to parents who are still alive or who over time become ill and die. More men and women reach adulthood with both parents alive than was true early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and men and women from contemporary adult birth cohorts are likely to spend more years with one or more parents aged 65 and older than they are to spend with children under age 18 (Watkins, Menken, & Bongaarts, 1987). Despite these demographic trends, relatively little social demography and family research to date has focused on midlife adults in their adult child role vis-a-vis their aging parents, and how this adult child role might be related to midlife adults' well-being.

Table 6 describes the population distribution of men and women who have parents alive and who have parents in good or poor health. For these analyses MIDUS respondent reports of whether father and mother were alive were combined with reports from respondents about the relative health of their parents ("How would you rate your biological mother's/father's current physical health? Excellent, very good, good, fair, poor?") to create seven mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories of respondents. The first category included respondents who reported both parents were alive and both were "healthy" (i.e., rated global health for each as good, very good, or excellent, in contrast to fair or poor). The second category included respondents who reported both parents alive, but one or both were "unhealthy" (i.e., rated global health for at least one living parent as fair or poor). The third category included respondents who reported only mother alive, but she was healthy. The fourth category included respondents who reported only mother

alive, but unhealthy. The fifth category included respondents with only a father alive who was healthy. The sixth, only a father alive who was unhealthy. And the final category included respondents who reported both parents had died prior to their interview in 1995.

The population estimates provided in Table 6 show the dramatic changes in adult child role status vis-a-vis aging parents that occur across the middle life course. At young adult ages a little over one-third of the sample reported having both parents alive and both parents healthy. About half the young adult population reported only healthy living parent(s) (i.e., either both alive and healthy or only mom or dad alive and healthy). Reflecting gender differences in mortality rates, young adults were more than three times more likely to have a sole surviving mother than a sole surviving father. Less than one in twenty young adults had lost both parents to death.

[Table 6 about here]

By midlife ages 40-59, only about one in nine adults overall (10.5% of women and 12.8% of men) reported having both parents alive and both parents healthy. Another approximately one in three reported at least one unhealthy parent. About one in five midlife adults reported having a sole-surviving parent in poor health, most typically a mother. Already by midlife ages, less than one in ten adults reported having a father alive, healthy or not; and more than one quarter reported the loss of both parents.

By young old ages, it is quite uncommon to have both parents still alive. The vast majority of adults (80.5% of women and 90.3% of men) has experienced the death of both parents by these ages. The relatively small proportion of adults who do have living parents tends to mainly be comprised of persons with mothers who are still alive.



## Adults, Aging Parents, and Well-Being

Overall, there is little literature examining how the health and mortality of parents affects the well-being of adult children. The literature that does exist in this area tends to emphasize filial caregiving, and typically focuses on the stressful well-being consequences of becoming a caregiver for an aging parent (e.g., Brody, 1990; Horowitz, 1985; Marks, 1998; Marks & Lambert, 1999; Montgomery; 1992).

In this study, we wished to make a further contribution to the literature that considers the continuing potential influence of aging parents and their health status on the well-being of adult children. Since the population estimates provided in Table 6 suggested that most of the variance in the adult child role differentiated by the relative health and mortality of their parents is confined to the young adult and midlife adult years as we have defined them here, for our adult child role analyses, we limited our analytic sample only to respondents ages 25-59. Again we began by estimating a preliminary model including both men and women together, which included gender interaction variables to explore potential gender differences. We subsequently estimated models for women and men separately, adding age by adult child role interaction variables where cell sizes for both young adults made such a comparison possible (specifically, for contrasts of both parents alive, one or both unhealthy; only mom alive and healthy; only mom alive and unhealthy; and for both parents dead).

The results of these analyses are provided in Table 7. (Figure 3 graphically illustrates predicted well-being scores for population subgroups based on the estimates from models reported in Table 7.) The preliminary models that included men and women together suggested one robust gender difference: having a mother alive and unhealthy was associated with

significantly higher levels of dysphoria for women than for men. The models for women and men separately further demonstrated this gender difference. Specifically, among women, those who had a sole-surviving, unhealthy mother reported significantly higher rates of dysphoria than their women peers who continued to have two healthy parents. Among men, differences in the health and mortality of parents did not appear to have robust effects on dysphoria, although a trend effect age interaction suggested that having both parents dead by young adult ages was associated with higher levels of dysphoria among men than having both parents dead by midlife ages.

[Table 7 about here]

[Figure 3 about here]

For women, trend effects suggested that having both parents alive, but one or both unhealthy or having only mother alive but unhealthy were associated with lower psychological wellness for women than having both parents alive and healthy. Among men, trend effects suggested that having a mother alive but unhealthy, or having a father alive and healthy might be associated with less wellness. No age group differences were in evidence for men or women.

Again for global health, having a sole-surviving unhealthy mother appeared to possibly compromise women's self-rated health (trend effect). Additionally, a significant age interaction effect indicated that having both parents dead at young adult ages was associated with reporting significantly poorer health among women than having both parents dead at midlife adult ages.

All the adult child contrasts other than having both parents alive and healthy were associated with reporting poorer physical health among men, although trend level age interaction effects suggested that the negative effect of this status may be more problematic for midlife men

than young adult men. Differences in adult child status were not associated with differences in reports of generativity among men or women.

Overall, our results from this analysis of the adult child role in relation to aging parents suggest that: First, having unhealthy parents, particularly an unhealthy sole-surviving mother, can undermine the mental health and self-assessed physical health of young and midlife adults. We speculate (but cannot empirically verify with these data) that an unhealthy sole-surviving father is more likely to be remarried and therefore less worrisome due to care by the new spouse. Second, the negative effects of having a sole-surviving unhealthy mother are greater for women than for men. This is congruent with what we know about the gendered nature of the schemas for family roles (Rossi & Rossi, 1990), which have traditionally led women to assume greater emotional and instrumental caregiving responsibilities for family members (often leading to added stress) than men.

Third, the early death (i.e., by young adulthood) of both parents (in contrast to having both parents remain alive and healthy) may be associated with greater dysphoria among men and poorer assessments of physical health among women. It is difficult to reliably interpret these findings since we do not know exactly when parental deaths occurred (e.g., in childhood or young adulthood) or to what degree genetic selection is at work here. However, these suggestive findings do lead us to recommend that scholars studying midlife further explore the possible importance of ongoing relationships with parents in adulthood for mental and physical well-being.

## Conclusions

The aims of this chapter were to take advantage of the unique strengths of the MIDUS population data to examine gender and age variation in marital, parenting, and adult child vis-a-vis aging parent roles, and to investigate how these family role differences are associated with differences in physical, mental and social well-being. We have used the opportunity provided by these rich data to highlight the increased contemporary diversity within marital, parental, and adult child roles across the middle life course--e.g., by considering cohabiting and remarried partner statuses, by considering parenting experiences across different ages of children, and by considering variation in types of adult child role diversity based on differences in the health and mortality status of parents. Considering age group differences in population distributions across these roles also helped us draw attention to the implicit life course trajectories that take place in marital, parenting, and adult child roles; in other words, these roles each involve an age-related “career” that is likely to have different opportunities, challenges, constraints, and consequences for well-being. Early adulthood first marriage may be followed by divorce and possibly midlife remarriage or continued formerly married status. Parenting young children is followed by parenting adolescents, “launching” children, and finally, continued parental involvement with adult children. Young adult children may begin with having both parents still alive and providing them with support, but over time experience the loss of health of one or both parents, and the death of one or both parents.

We also use the MIDUS physical, mental, and social health measurements to highlight here the value of considering a wider range of different well-being outcomes in relation to these family roles than is typically employed in the literature, as well as gender and age differences in the impact of these role differences. The inclusion of a measure of social well-being--i.e.,

generativity--proved to be particularly illuminating. Examining multiple well-being outcomes we were better able to demonstrate the combination of both gains and strains that can be associated with family roles. For example, we found evidence that while being a parent can be associated with more psychological distress than being childfree, being a parent can also result in reports of greater psychological wellness and generativity.

Examining gender differences we found fewer marital status effect differences than some of the literature might have led us to expect. However, we did find important gender differences in the effects of a parenting role; men clearly evidenced greater psychological wellness benefits and generativity benefits from parenting than women. Women in an adult child role having only an unhealthy mother alive also reported more dysphoria than their male peers. However, young adult and midlife men without two healthy parents all showed some degree of reporting poorer physical health; this pattern was not replicated among women.

In the literature on family roles, potential age differences in the consequences of roles for well-being are typically ignored. However, we found age moderation results to be some of the most interesting findings of our study--highlighting the importance of considering substantive differences in the experience of adulthood in young adult vs. midlife adult vs. older adult years and demonstrating that, indeed, midlife is to some extent distinct. For example, in our marital status analyses we found never married midlife men reporting more dysphoria and less generativity than never married young adult men. We also found midlife women in nontraditional marital statuses (cohabiting, remarried, and formerly married) to be reporting more psychological wellness than younger women in these statuses. Midlife women parenting children under 19 reported more dysphoria than younger women parenting children these ages. Older

women with young adult children (aged 19 or older) reported more psychological wellness than midlife women with young adult children. Women with both parents dead at young adult ages reported significantly poorer overall health than women reporting both parents dead at midlife ages.

In sum, we believe there is sufficient evidence here to recommend that future research on family roles and well-being continue to investigate diverse dimensions of well-being to better gauge the costs and benefits of family roles. We also believe it is important to continue to consider both gender and age moderation of effects.

However, we must also acknowledge the many limitations of this broad-brush study. While we have made efforts to take a more differentiated approach to examining family roles and well-being, we have still not taken into full account additional important axes of variance. For example, we have not fully addressed the considerable differences in prevalence of family role categories by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Marks, 1996a), and the potential these differences might have on moderating family role effects on well-being. For parsimony's sake, we have also ignored here important differences in role quality and role history (Wheaton, 1990) that we expect would also have a significant impact on how differences in family role encumbancy influence multiple dimensions of well-being. We have not carefully examined different combinations of roles and evaluated how this might influence the impact of role experience. We used cross-sectional data here, so our inferences of causality occurring from family roles to well-being are not definitive. Neither can we necessarily infer that differences across the range of different birth cohorts we include is telling us a story of developmental change. We are certain that important period and cohort effects are embedded in this analysis

given the considerable family and social changes we outlined at the outset; therefore we urge reader caution in making developmental inferences.

Future research will be needed to address these many limitations and to keep apace of tracking the continuing evolution in family role variance in the years to come. Nonetheless, we believe the results of our work here confirm the continued significance of family roles, responsibilities, opportunities, and constraints for the ongoing development and well-being of adults across the middle life course at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And we see no evidence to suggest that the family is an obsolete institution that will not remain a significant context and constituting factor for adult well-being in the century ahead.

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TABLE 1  
Weighted Percentage Distribution (Unweighted n) of the Number of Times of Married, U.S. Adults Aged 25-74

Number of Marriage	Total Sample		Women		Men	
	Unweighted N	Weighted %	Unweighted N	Weighted %	Unweighted N	Weighted %
0	351	11.5	163	10.9	188	12.4
1	1980	65.8	1030	66.1	950	65.4
2	557	18.3	292	18.8	265	17.8
3	117	3.7	63	3.7	54	3.7
4	23	.6	11	.5	12	.7
5	3	.1	2	.1	1	.1
Total	3031	100.0	1561	100.0	1470	100.0

Source: National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States 1995 (MIDUS).

Note: Percentage columns do not always total 100.0 due to rounding error.

TABLE 2  
Weighted Percentage Distribution of Marital Status by Age and Gender

	Young Adults Aged 25 - 39				Midlife Adults Aged 40 - 59				Young Old Adults Aged 60 - 74			
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men	
	Unwgt n	Wgt %	Unwgt n	Wgt %	Unwgt n	Wgt %	Unwgt n	Wgt %	Unwgt n	Wgt %	Unwgt n	Wgt %
<b><u>Marital Status</u></b>												
First Marriage	244	50.6	258	55.1	301	47.1	354	53.5	135	48.9	171	62.4
Remarried	52	11.2	45	10.7	118	20.0	153	24.6	36	12.9	56	19.1
Sep/Div-Cohabiting	22	5.6	9	2.3	17	3.0	20	3.6	2	.5	1	.7
Widow-Cohabiting	0	.0	0	.0	0	.0	3	.4	1	.1	1	.3
Never Mar-Cohabiting	24	5.8	34	7.1	2	.4	7	1.0	1	.7	0	.0
Sep/Div-NoCohabiting	76	11.7	49	8.9	187	20.2	100	11.9	45	10.0	25	6.9
Widow-NoCohabiting	2	.3	1	.3	38	4.4	7	.6	104	25.4	20	5.3
Never Mar-No Cohabiting	89	14.7	94	15.7	37	5.0	38	4.5	10	1.5	14	5.3
Total	509	100.0	490	100.0	700	100.0	682	100.0	334	100.0	288	100.0

Source: National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States 1995 (MIDUS).

Note: Percentage columns do not always total 100.0 due to rounding error.



TABLE 3  
Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for the Effects of Marital Status on Well-being by Gender

PREDICTORS	Dysphoria		Psychological Wellness (Ryff)		Self-assessed Global Health		Generativity		
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	
First marriage (omitted)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Remarried	.56	.63+	1.97	-1.06	.03	-.21*	1.11**	.07	
Cohabiting	.36	.61	2.53	-2.54	-.03	.07	.21	.98	
Formerly married	.75*	1.05**	-.36	-2.91*	-.07	-.16	.66+	.33	
Never married	-.91	1.87**	-2.47 <sup>a</sup>	-7.14*** <sup>a</sup>	.03	-.05	.38 <sup>a</sup>	-1.24 <sup>a</sup>	
Age1 (25-39 yrs)	-.14	.98**	1.99+	.45	.16+	.05	.05	-.82*	
Age2 (40-59 yrs) (omitted)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
Age3 (60-74 yrs)	-1.25**	-1.32***	.91	3.65***	-.01	.04	.29	.07	
Age1 X Remarried	.60	-.30	-5.35**	.51	-.16	.27	-1.35+	.46	
Age3 X Remarried	-1.02	.35	-2.42	-2.43		-.04	.15	-1.46	-.12
Age1X Cohabiting	-.02	-.08	-5.99*	2.38	-.31	-.13	-.56	.23	
Age1X Formerly married	.98	-.93	-5.61**	.03	-.19	.16	-.27	-.80	
Age3 X Formerly married	-.41	.28	1.28	-1.30	.16	.21	-.72	.88	
Age1X Never married	1.84*	-2.01**	-1.95	4.66*	-.19	.09	-.24	1.75*	
Constant	12.17***	9.93***	54.14***	57.84***	2.50***	2.47***	13.59***	14.75***	
R <sup>2</sup>	.06	.07	.09	.08	.13	.14	.09	.06	

Source: National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States 1995 (MIDUS). Analyses used unweighted data.

+  $p \leq .10$  \*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$  \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed test).

<sup>a</sup> Model estimated with men and women together revealed a trend level gender difference ( $p \leq .10$ ).

Note: All models also included controls for race/ethnicity, employment status, education, household income, parental status, and adult child status.

TABLE 4  
 Weighted Percentage Distribution (Unweighted n) of Parental Status by Age and Gender, U.S. Adults Aged 25-74

Parental Status	Young Adults Aged 25 - 39				Midlife Adults Aged 40 - 59				Young Old Adults Aged 60 - 74			
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men	
	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %
Age of Youngest Child: 5 yrs or less	174	37.4	153	33.5	16	3.1	38	7.2	0	0.0	0	0.0
Age of Youngest Child: 6 yrs to 18 yrs	178	37.8	121	28.1	213	35.7	267	45.4	1	.3	9	2.9
Age of Youngest Child: 19 yrs or older	4	.8	1	.3	380	53.8	261	37.7	296	92.5	237	87.1
No Child	144	24.0	201	38.1	58	7.4	77	9.6	24	7.2	23	10.0
Total	500	100.0	476	100.0	667	100.0	643	100.0	321	100.0	269	100.0

Source: National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States, 1995 (MIDUS).

Note: Definition of parent here includes all biological or adoptive parents together with stepparents who indicated they had played a significant role in rearing a child in their household for five or more years. Percentage columns do not always total 100.0 due to rounding error.

TABLE 5  
Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for the Effects of Parental Status on Well-being by Gender

PREDICTORS	Dysphoria		Psychological Wellness (Ryff)		Self-assessed Global Health		Generativity	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
No children (omitted)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Age of youngest 5 yrs or less	2.87*	-.84	-9.62*** <sup>a</sup>	.59 <sup>a</sup>	-.50+	-.08	-2.10+ <sup>c</sup>	1.45+ <sup>c</sup>
Age of youngest 6 yrs to 18 yrs	.66	-.26	-3.22+ <sup>b</sup>	2.02 <sup>b</sup>	-.25+	-.09	.42	1.14*
Age of youngest 19 yrs or older	.47	-1.05*	-.87 <sup>c</sup>	2.88* <sup>c</sup>	-.34**	-.11	.31 <sup>b</sup>	1.51*** <sup>b</sup>
Age1 (25-39 yrs)	1.33*	.14	-.24	3.11*	-.27+	.03	-.16	.57
Age2 (40-59 yrs) (omitted)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Age3 (60-74 yrs)	-.10	-1.44+	-5.40+	3.26	-.24	-.09	-.33	.12
Age1 X Age of youngest 5 yrs or less	-3.39**	1.05	6.72+	-.61	.62*	.09	1.97+	-1.40
Age1 X Age of youngest 6 yrs to 18 yrs	-1.58*	-.14	1.39	-2.53	.29	.10	-.12	-1.70**
Age3 X Age of youngest 19 yrs or older	-1.41	.23	6.09*	-.77	.35	.22	.13	-.16
Constant	12.38***	11.44***	55.51***	53.28***	2.72***	2.45***	13.86***	13.78***
R <sup>2</sup>	.06	.07	.09	.07	.14	.13	.09	.05

Source: National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States 1995 (MIDUS). Analyses used unweighted data.

+  $p \leq .10$  \*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$  \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed test).

<sup>a</sup> Model estimated with men and women together revealed a significant gender differences ( $p \leq .01$ ).

<sup>b</sup> Model estimated with men and women together revealed a significant gender differences ( $p \leq .05$ ).

<sup>c</sup> Model estimated with men and women together revealed a trend level gender differences ( $p \leq .10$ ).

Note: All models also included controls for race/ethnicity, employment status, education, household income, marital status, and adult child status.

TABLE 6  
Weighted Percentage Distribution of Adult Child Status by Age and Gender

	Young Adults Aged 25 - 39				Midlife Adults Aged 40 - 59				Young Old Adults Aged 60 - 74			
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men	
	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %	Unwgted n	Wgted %
<b>Adult Child Status</b>												
Both parents alive, both healthy	164	35.0	161	36.0	70	10.5	85	12.8	1	.2	2	.3
Both parents alive, 1 or both unhealthy	174	37.7	161	35.3	105	18.3	105	16.5	7	2.9	3	.7
Only mom alive, healthy	57	11.2	60	12.5	123	18.1	117	18.5	26	6.1	12	3.8
Only mom alive, unhealthy	35	7.6	26	6.1	110	17.6	94	14.8	28	8.7	15	3.7
Only dad alive, healthy	16	3.8	17	4.0	28	3.9	36	5.8	2	.8	3	.6
Only dad alive, unhealthy	7	1.4	10	1.9	20	3.0	22	3.8	2	.8	2	.5
Both parents dead	15	3.3	22	4.2	189	28.6	185	27.9	250	80.5	227	90.3
Total	468	100.0	457	100.0	645	100.0	644	100.0	316	100.0	264	100.0

Source: National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States 1995 (MIDUS).

Note: Percentage column do not always total 100.0 due to rounding error.

TABLE 7  
Unstandardized Regression Coefficients for the Effects of Adult Child Status on Well-being by Gender, U.S. Adults Aged 25-59

PREDICTORS	Dysphoria		Psychological Wellness (Ryff)		Global Health		Generativity	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Both parents alive, both healthy (omitted)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Both parents alive, 1 or both unhealthy	.58	.45	-3.01+	-1.58	-.12	-.23+	-.10	.06
Only mom alive, healthy	-.49	-.04	.46	-1.39	.02	-.30*	-.10	-.25
Only mom alive, unhealthy	1.20* <sup>a</sup>	.19 <sup>a</sup>	-3.18+	-2.62+	-.26+	-.24+	.20	-.24
Only dad alive, healthy	-.61	.58	.14	-3.07+	-.19	-.32*	.29	-.23
Only dad alive, unhealthy	-.50	.01	-.25	-1.54	-.28	-.50**	-.47	.08
Both parents died	-.35	-.41	.76	.22	-.09	-.31**	.23	-.03
Age1 (29-39 yrs)	-.27	.30	-.23	1.83	.12	.09	-.37	-.30
Age2 (40-59 yrs) (omitted)	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
Age1 X Both parents alive, 1 or both unhealthy	.25	.15	1.34	-1.13	-.14	-.11	.20	-.47
Age1 X Only mom alive, healthy	1.39	-.43	-1.67	1.35	.01	.30+	-.00	-.87
Age1 X Only mom alive, unhealthy	-.54	.01	2.80	-2.72	.11	-.12	.19	-.69
Age1 X Both parents dead	1.16	1.70+	-2.80	.07	-.60*	.24	.89	-.24
Constant	12.82***		54.79***	56.38***	2.75***	2.60***	13.96***	14.77***
R <sup>2</sup>	.07	.06	.09	.08	.11	.14	.09	.05

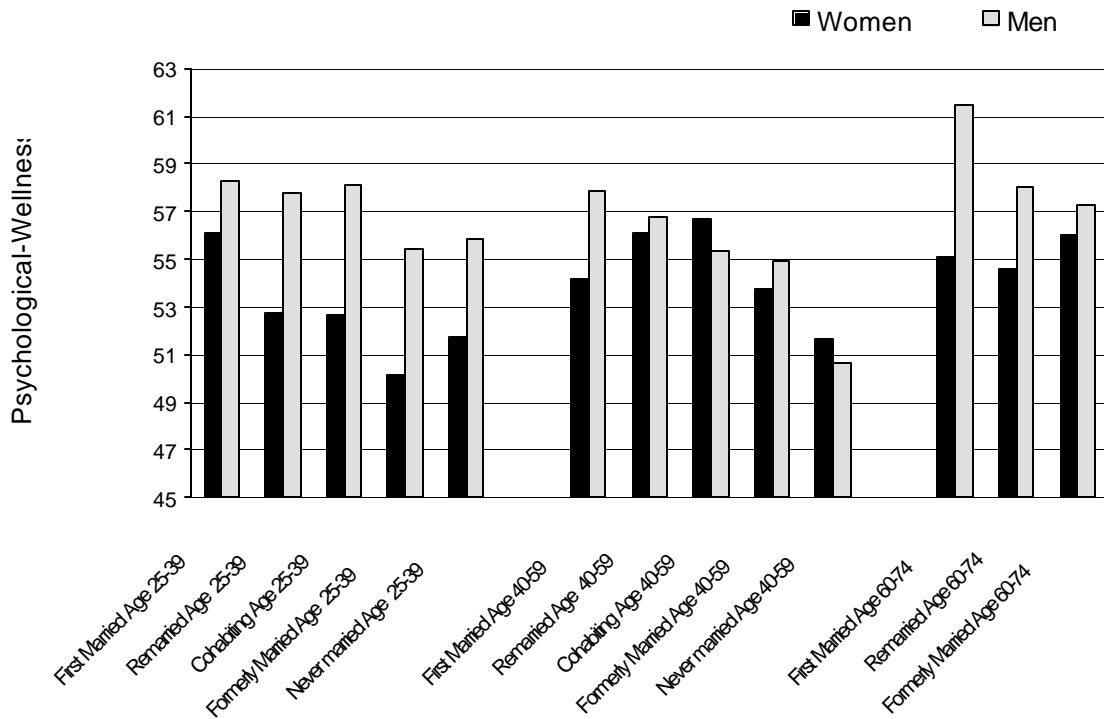
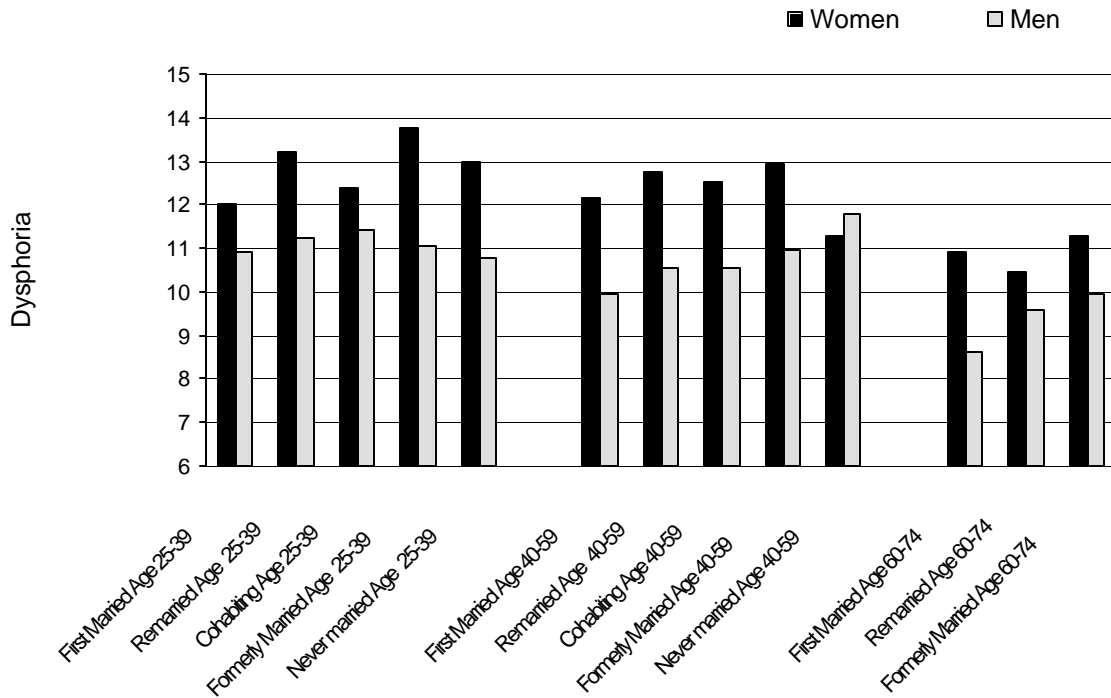
Source: National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States 1995 (MIDUS). Analyses used unweighted data.

+  $p \leq .10$  \*  $p \leq .05$  \*\*  $p \leq .01$  \*\*\*  $p \leq .001$  (two-tailed test)

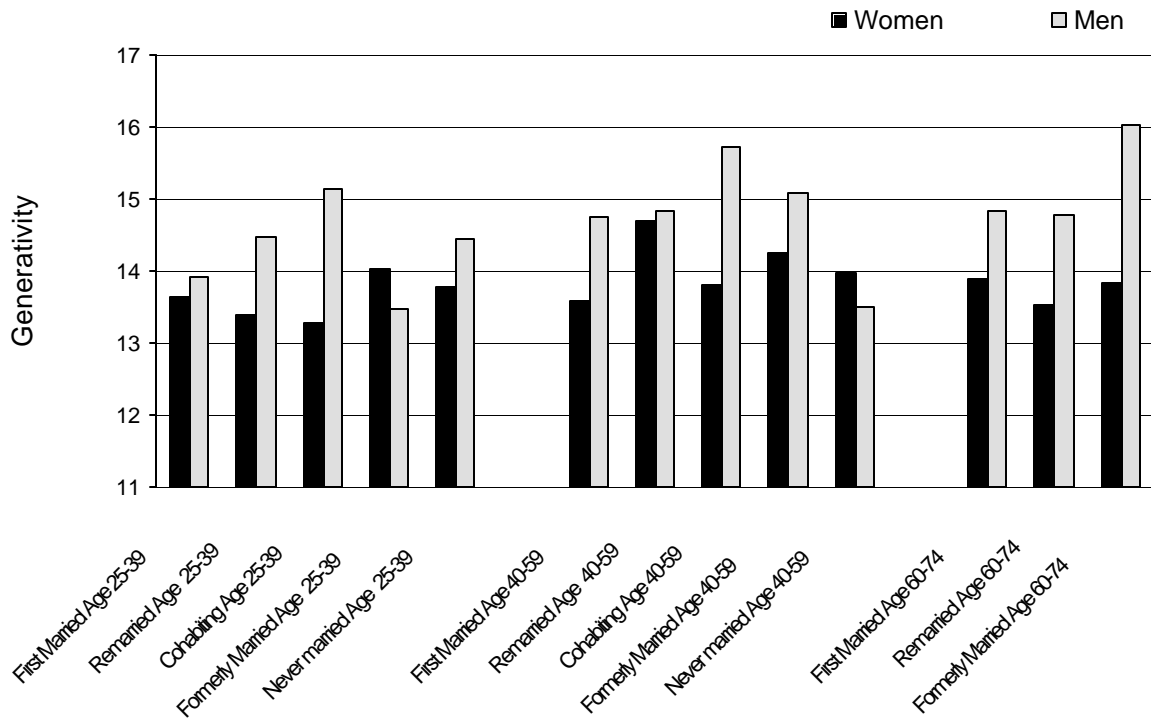
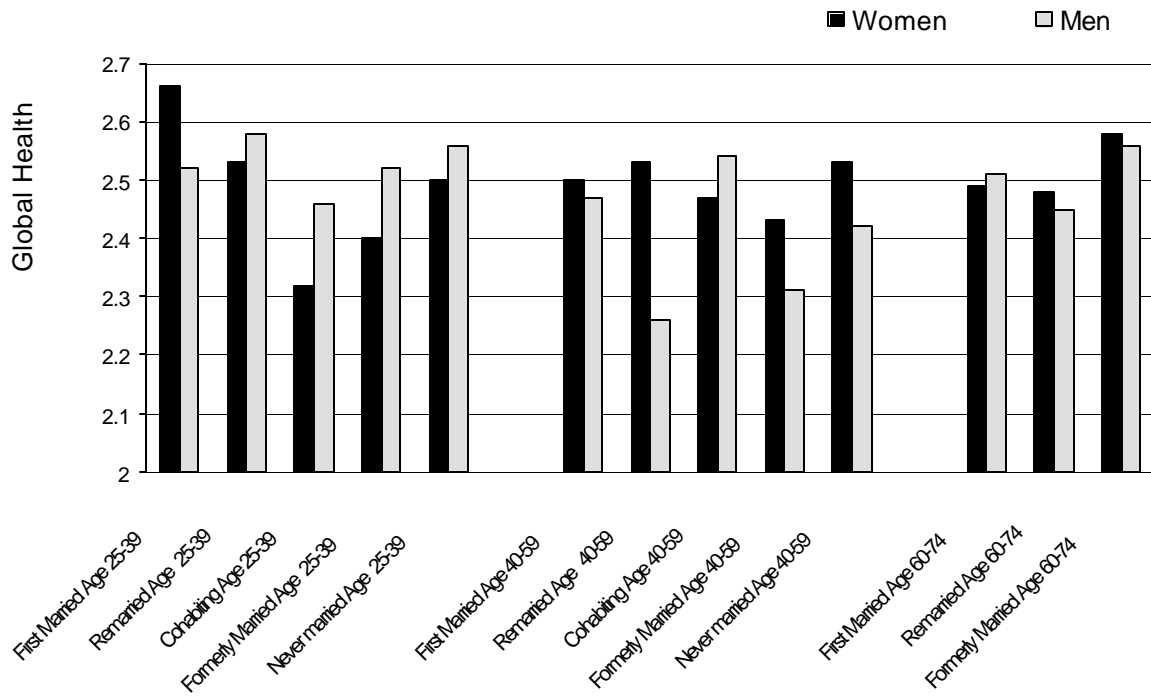
<sup>a</sup> Model estimated with men and women together revealed a significant gender difference ( $p \leq .05$ ).

Note: All models also included controls for race/ethnicity, employment status, education, household income, marital status, and parental status.

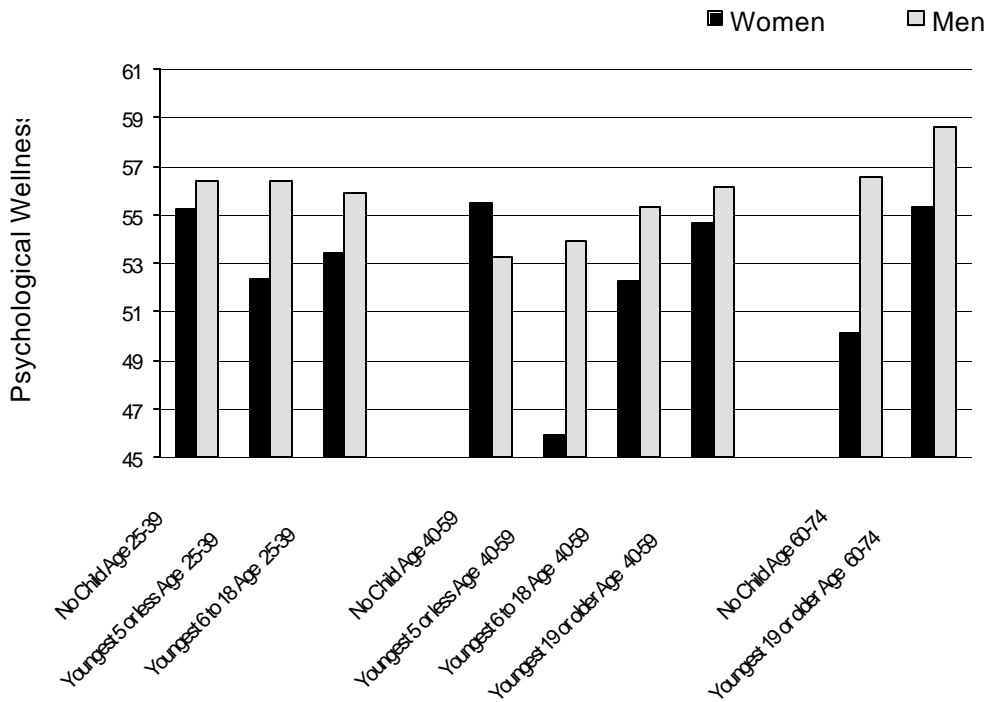
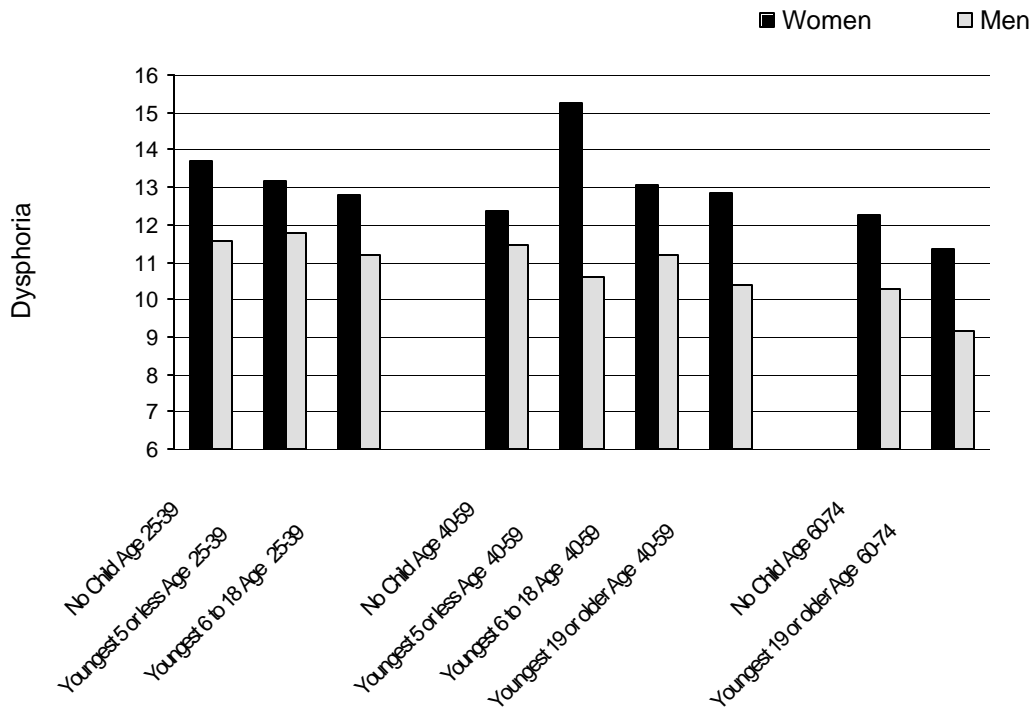
**Figure 1 . Predicted Well-Being Scores by Marital Status, Age, and Gender**



**Figure 1 (continued). Predicted Well-Being Scores by Marital Status, Age, and Gender**

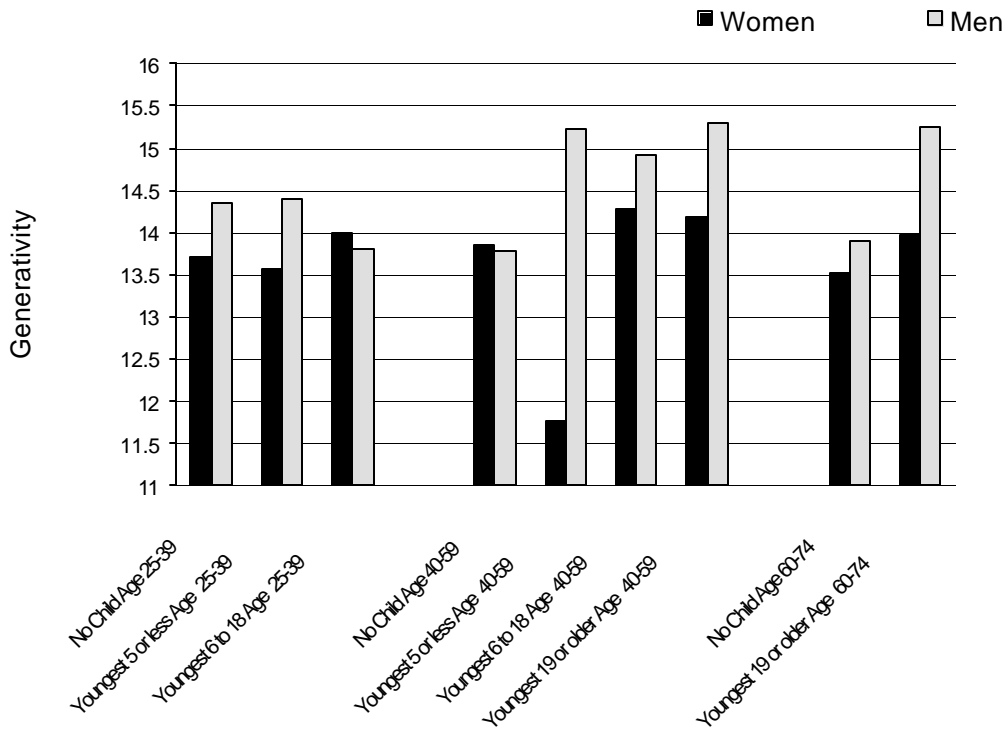
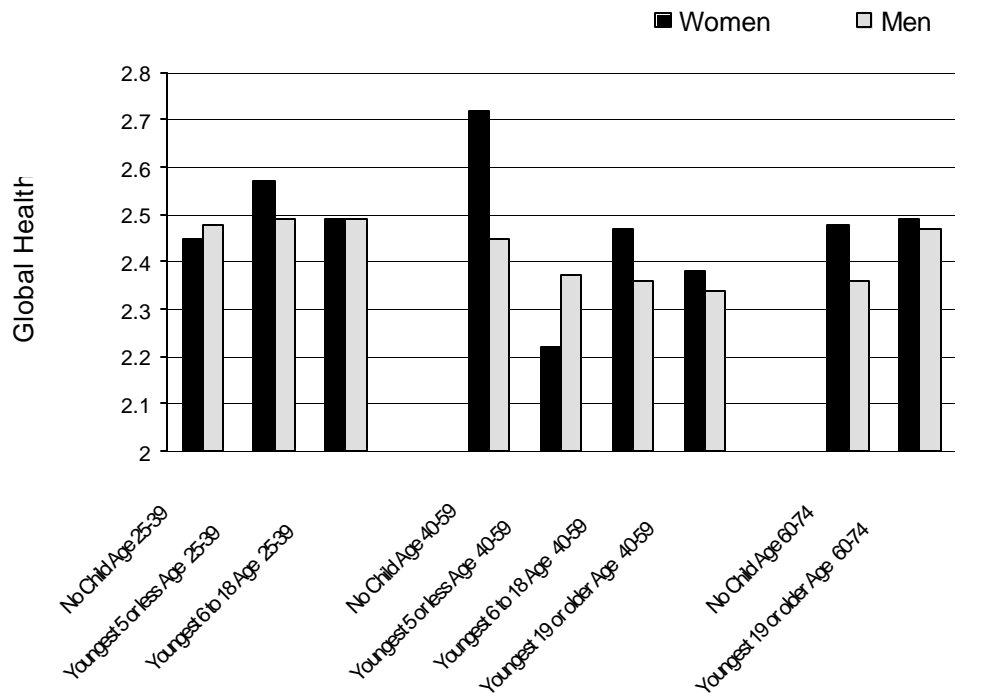


**Figure 2. Predicted Well-Being Scores by Parental Status, Age, and Gender**

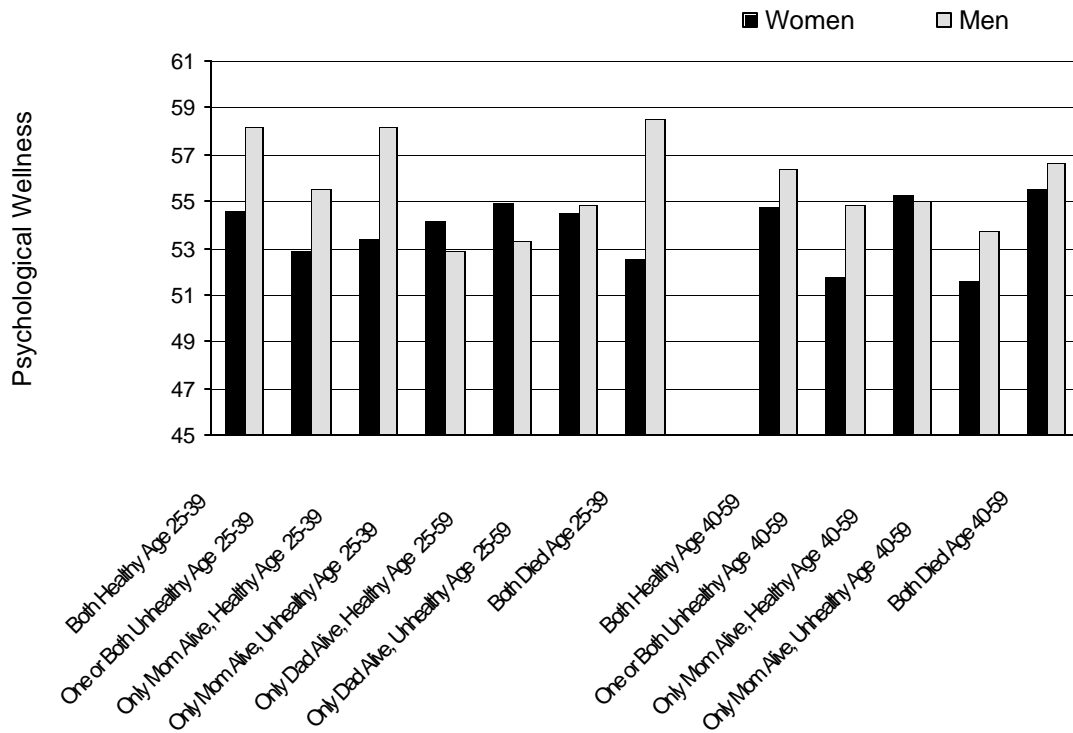
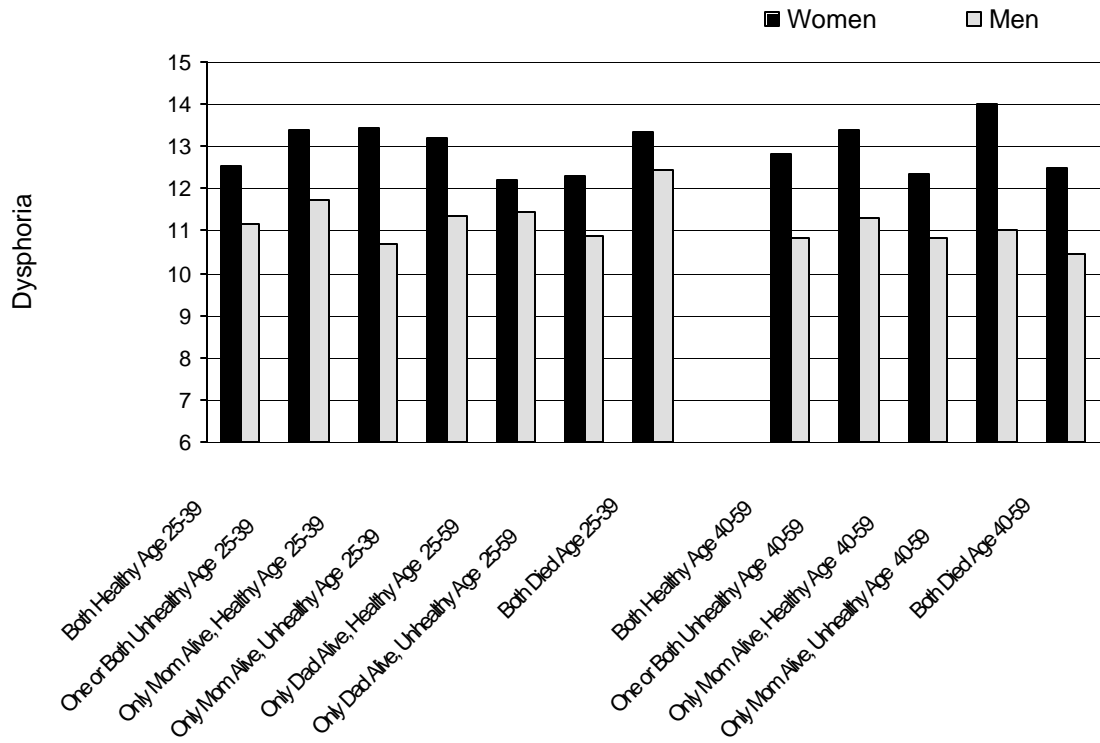




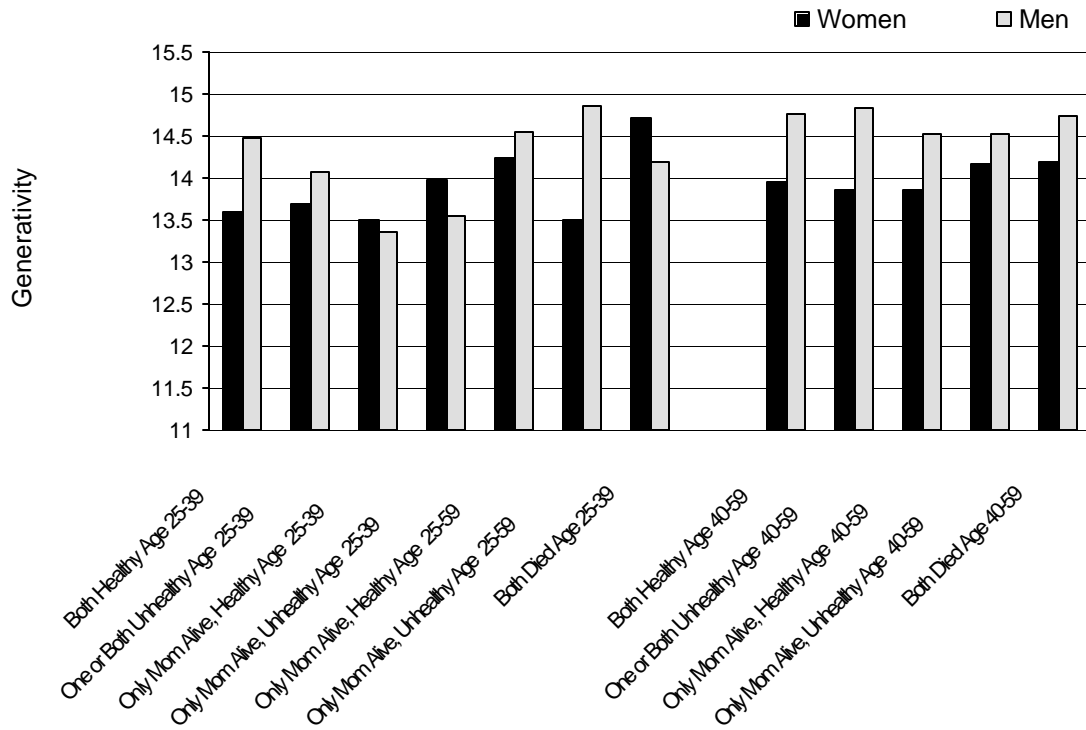
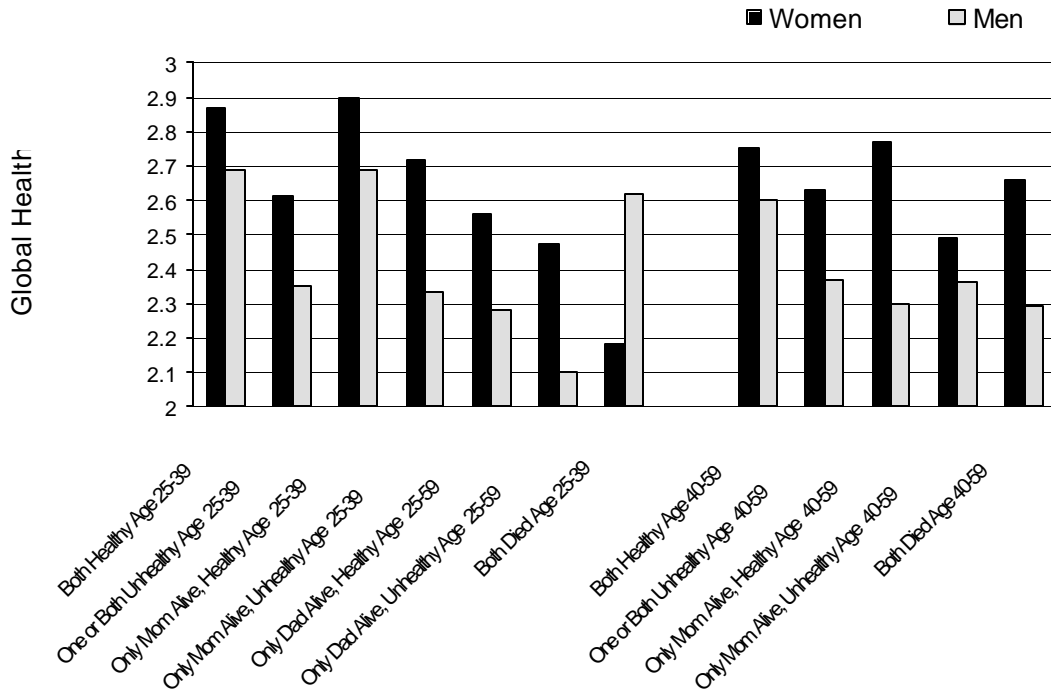
**Figure 2 (continued). Predicted Well-Being Scores by Parental Status, Age, and Gender**



**Figure 3. Predicted Well-Being Scores by Adult Child Status, Age, and Gender**



**Figure 3 (continued). Predicted Well-Being Scores by Adult Child Status, Age, and Gender**



## Appendix

### DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS FOR ANALYSIS VARIABLES

	Total Sample Mean (s.d.) n=3,032	Women Mean (s.d.) n=1,714	Men Mean (s.d.) n=1,318
<b><u>Outcome Variables</u></b>			
Dysphoria	9.50 (3.89)	9.88 (4.14)	9.01 (3.49)
Psychological Wellness (Ryff)	63.26 (10.89)	62.67 (10.99)	64.02 (10.71)
Self-assessed Global Health	3.41 (1.00)	3.37 (1.02)	3.46 (.97)
Generativity	16.94 (3.74)	17.02 (3.77)	16.83 (3.71)
<b><u>Demographic Characteristics</u></b>			
Female	.57		
Age	45.30 (13.78)	45.49 (13.69)	45.05 (13.20)
Age1 (25-39yrs)	.41	.41	.40
Age2 (40-59yrs)	.40	.39	.42
Age3 (60-74yrs)	.19	.20	.18
<b><i>Marital Status</i></b>			
First Marriage	.52	.49	.56
Remarried	.16	.15	.18
Cohabiting	.06	.06	.06
Formerly Married	.17	.22	.11
Never Married	.09	.08	.09
<b><i>Parental Status</i></b>			
Age of Youngest Child: Less Than 5 yrs	.17	.17	.17
Age of Youngest Child: 6 to 18 yrs	.30	.29	.31
Age of Youngest Child: 19 or older	.36	.39	.31
No Child	.17	.14	.21
<b><i>Adult Child Status</i></b>			
Both alive, both healthy	.19	.18	.20
Both alive, 1 or both unhealthy	.22	.23	.21
Only mom alive, healthy	.13	.13	.14
Only mom alive, unhealthy	.11	.12	.09
Only dad alive, healthy	.04	.03	.04
Only dad alive, unhealthy	.02	.02	.02
Both parents died	.29	.29	.29
Black	.11	.13	.10
Employed	.73	.66	.81
Level of Education <sup>a</sup>	2.58 (.98)	2.52 (.96)	2.67 (1.01)
Household Income (in thousands)	50.75 (43.88)	45.47 (39.71)	57.61 (47.93)

Source: National Survey of Midlife Development in the United States 1995 (MIDUS).

Analyses used weighted data

Note: Descriptive statistics calculated using weighted data. Dichotomous variable means are proportions.

<sup>a</sup> Range for level of education: 1= less than high school graduation, 2= high school graduation, 3=some college, 4=college graduation or more.

Center for Demography and Ecology  
University of Wisconsin  
1180 Observatory Drive Rm. 4412  
Madison, WI 53706-1393  
U.S.A.  
608/262-2182  
FAX 608/262-8400  
comments to: [marks@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:marks@ssc.wisc.edu)  
requests to: [cdepubs@ssc.wisc.edu](mailto:cdepubs@ssc.wisc.edu)