

National
 Organization of
 Mothers
 Of
 Twins
 Clubs, Inc.

SUBJECT: **EFFECTS OF MULTIPLES ON THE
 FAMILY UNIT & MARRIAGE**

RESEARCHER: National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this survey is to target the effects of multiples on marriage and on the entire family unit.

METHOD: This interorganizational survey was completed by mothers of multiples. Included in these responses are mothers of adopted multiples and mothers who have lost a multiple. The responses represented all twin types, including 45 sets of triplets and 7 sets of supertwins. The sample consisted of 1673 surveys received by the Executive Office. This survey was divided into six sections.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

I. ARRIVAL OF CHILDREN:

- A. 87% of mothers had prior knowledge that they were having a multiple birth
- B. 79% felt they had ample time to prepare the household for the multiple arrival
- C. 54% had children before their multiple birth
 - 50% of these had families of either 1 or 2 children
- D. 19% had children after the multiple birth
- E. 1% had adopted twins

II. MARRIAGE/DIVORCE:

- A. Length of marriage before birth of multiples:
 - 1. 21% were married 0-2 years
 - 2. 45% were married 3-6 years
 - 3. 24% were married 7-10 years
- B. 94% of the respondents were still married to the fathers of the multiples
- C. Of those respondents who were divorced,
 - 1. When did the divorces occur?
 - a) 11% divorced during 0-6 months of marriage
 - b) 8% divorced during 7-11 months of marriage
 - c) 45% divorced during 1-3 years of marriage
 - c) 15% divorced during 4-6 years of marriage
 - d) 21% divorced after more than 6 years of marriage
 - 2. Did stress of multiples contribute to divorces?
 89% answered NO

3. Remarried (only 32 of the respondents)
 - 44% of these had combined families
 - 1) 29% felt marriage was more difficult because of multiples
 - 2) Only 8 of the 32 respondents felt it was harder to meet prospective spouses because of the multiples

III. WORK:

- A. 71% worked regularly before the births of their multiples
 - 54% of these worked full time
- B. 81% worked after the births of their multiples
 - 59% of these worked full time
- C. When did mothers return to work?
 1. 56% of mothers returned to work by the first year
 - 45% of these returned by the first 6 months
 2. 12% waited until multiples were in school before returning to work
- D. Did financial drain of multiples cause marital stress?
 1. 47% - somewhat
 2. 39% - no
 3. 8% - yes
- E. Needed additional financial help:
 1. 9% of husbands and 5% of wives got second jobs
 2. 8% of parents sought public assistance

IV. HEALTH OF MULTIPLES:

- A. 80% of multiples were healthy at birth
- B. 13% developed major illnesses after birth
 1. 32% of mothers who dealt with health problems felt this caused an additional strain on their marriage
 2. 1% of mothers who dealt with health problems blamed their spouses
 3. 16% felt the financial difficulties associated with the illnesses were a major source of stress in their marriages
 4. 38% felt the emotional aspects of the illness were a major source of stress in their marriage

V. HELP WITH DAILY CARE:

- A. Were husbands helpful with bathing, feeding and changing newborn multiples?
 1. 67% - yes
 2. 24% - sometimes
 3. 7% - not at all
- B. 69% of husbands were helpful during the first year
- C. 68% of husbands did not leave care of multiples up to their wives only
- D. Outside help
 1. 18% - consistent outside help
 2. 40% - occasional help
- E. Most emotional support after birth of multiples came from:
 1. 48% - family
 2. 9% - friends
 3. 33% - combination

VI. RELATIONSHIPS:

- A. Were relationships with husbands affected?
 - 1. 44% remained consistent
 - 2. 50% felt there was a change
 - half of above said better--half said worse
- B. Older children's reactions to upcoming birth of multiples
 - 1. 48% admitted not informing siblings about birth of multiples
 - 2. 30% did know and were excited
 - 3. 15% too young to understand
- C. Resentment of time Mom spent in routine care of multiples
 - 1. 64% of older children felt resentment
 - a) 51% resented it "most of the time"
 - b) 51% resented it "occasionally"
 - 2. 32% of husbands felt resentment "occasionally"
 - 4% of husbands felt resentment "most of the time"
 - 3. 54% of mothers themselves resented all the time needed for routine care of multiples

CONCLUSION:

- 1. Only 6% of those answering were divorced. Most did not feel that multiples contributed to their divorces. Multiples may have accelerated divorce that was inevitable.
- 2. Majority felt most of the stress of having multiples occurs during the first two years. Types of stress were: lack of sleep, excess work for mother and lack of time to spend with spouse. Having multiples disrupts the marriage only temporarily.

Many additional comments were written by the members and will appear in "Survey Comments" article in future issue of *MOTC's Notebook*.