

National  
Organization of  
Mothers  
Of  
Twins  
Clubs, Inc.

SUBJECT:

Twins, Virtual Twins & Friends

RESEARCHER:

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**PURPOSE:** The purpose of the study was to analyze the similarities and differences among twins, virtual twins and friends. Within this broad topic the research specifically investigated developmental trends in intellectual development, the ability to coordinate efforts toward a common goal and the development of trust in sibling and twin relationships.

**METHOD:** The survey was administered to a variety of participants, including members of the National Organization of Mothers of Twins Clubs, Inc.

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#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The researcher defines virtual twins as the same age unrelated children being raised together. When studying similarities in body size the Body Mass Index (BMI) was used. BMI is measured as height in meters squared divided by weight in kilograms. All of the children were tested at two ages, approximately five and ten years of age. The children were given a series of questions to answer and then asked the questions a second time and asked to reply the same way that their twin or sibling would answer. Each child in the dyad was interviewed about its co-twin's or sibling's promise-keeping, secret-keeping, and honesty.

#### RESULTS:

Three papers and a book chapter were published from this study. Several important facts were uncovered by this survey. It was determined that virtual twins become less alike in intelligence over time and when compared with identical and fraternal twins they are much less alike. Identical twins are better able to coordinate their efforts toward a common goal while both types of twins are better at coordination than virtual twins. Identical twins are more alike in their BMI than fraternal twins who were more alike than virtual twins. At the same time identical twins were more likely to match answers in both conditions and much more likely to report trusting their siblings compared to fraternal twins, virtual twins and full siblings.

#### CONCLUSION:

This study showed that identical twins tend to be more similar than fraternal, virtual or full siblings in all the categories surveyed. As children age the effects of family become less potent since they exercise more freedom in picking and choosing their activities. Of all the study groups identical twins were the best able to coordinate efforts toward a common goal. We also learned that shared family environment contributes to how children in a family were similar in body size. It was also noted that sibling trust is higher for children who reported high maternal trust and low sibling conflict. Finally we see that although type of twin is important in analyzing similarities and differences that environment and family relationships also play a part in their development .