

National

*Organization of
Mothers*

Of

Twins

Clubs, Inc.

SUBJECT:

**NOMOTC'S EFFECTS OF MULTIPLE
BIRTH CHILDREN ON MARRIAGE**

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

DATE:

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PURPOSE: The purpose of this survey was to examine the effect of multiple birth children on marital relationships including causes of marital stress and strategies to promote a healthy relationship in response to identified stressors.

METHOD: A survey consisting of 32 questions was made available online via Survey Monkey. The survey was to be completed by members of NOMOTC.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION / RESULTS

There were 306 respondents to the survey, although not everyone answered every question.

1. Are you currently married to the mother or father of your multiples?

a. Yes	94%	(283)
b. Separated	2%	(5)
c. No	5%	(14)

2. How long after the birth of your multiples did your divorce/separation take place?

a. One	79%	(153)
b. Two	11%	(22)
c. Three	6%	(11)
d. Four or more	4%	(7)

3. How long have you been married?

a. 0-2 years	9%	(27)
b. 3-6 years	33%	(98)
c. 7-10 years	25%	(75)
d. 11-20 years	23%	(69)
e. 21-30 years	8%	(23)
f. Longer than 31 years	2%	(5)
g.		

4. Please list your age and your spouse's (or ex's) age at the time of your marriage

a. < 20	2%	(14)
b. 20 – 25	27%	(159)
c. 26 – 30	30%	(175)
d. 31 – 35	21%	(122)
e. 36 – 40	11%	(64)
f. 41 – 45	5%	(28)
g. > 45	4%	(25)

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5. What type of multiples do you have (list all that apply):
- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|------|-------|
| a. Twins | 92% | (270) |
| b. Triplets | 6% | (18) |
| c. Quadruplets | 0.3% | (1) |
| d. Quintuplets or higher | 0 | |
| e. We have multiple sets of multiples | 1.4% | (4) |
6. At what stage in your marriage were your multiples born?
- | | | |
|---|------------|--------------|
| a. Prior to marriage | 2% | (6) |
| b. During first 2 years of marriage | 20% | (59) |
| c. Between 3rd and 6th years | 55% | (162) |
| d. Between 7 th and 10 th years | 16% | (47) |
| e. Between 11 th and 20 th years | 6% | (16) |
| f. After the 21 st year of marriage | 1% | (3) |
7. Number of children and ages of children:
- | | | |
|--|------------|--------------|
| a. Multiples only | 58% | (133) |
| b. Multiples plus one singleton | 30% | (70) |
| c. Multiples plus two | 8% | (18) |
| d. Multiples plus three | 3% | (6) |
| e. Multiples plus 4 or more singletons | 1% | (3) |
- Ages of children:
- | | | |
|------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| a. Multiples aged < 1 year | 18% | (83) |
| b. Multiples aged 1-5 years | 52% | (240) |
| c. Multiples aged 6-10 yrs | 15% | (68) |
| d. Multiples aged 11-15 yrs | 4% | (18) |
| e. Multiples aged 16-20 yrs | 5% | (25) |
| f. Multiples aged >20 yrs | 6% | (26) |
| a. Singletons aged < 1 year | 6% | (9) |
| b. Singletons aged 1-5 yrs | 33% | (47) |
| c. Singletons aged 6-10 yrs | 16% | (23) |
| d. Singletons aged 11-15 yrs | 12% | (17) |
| e. Singletons aged 16-20 yrs | 12% | (17) |
| f. Singletons aged >20 | 20% | (29) |
8. Were your multiples adopted?
- | | | |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| a. Yes | 0.3% | (1) |
| b. No | 99.7% | (292) |
9. Did you enlist the help of a surrogate to have your multiples?
- | | | |
|----|------|--|
| No | 100% | |
|----|------|--|
10. Were you undergoing fertility treatment when the multiple pregnancy occurred?
- | | | |
|---------------------|-----|------|
| a. Yes | 40% | (18) |
| b. No | 60% | (27) |
| c. Skipped question | | 261 |

11. At what gestational age were your multiples born?
- | | |
|--|------------------|
| a. Prior to 26 weeks gestation | 1.1% (3) |
| b. Between 26 and 30 wks. gestation | 8.9% (25) |
| c. Between 31 and 34 wks. gestation | 27% (77) |
| d. Between 35 and 37 wks. gestation | 43% (121) |
| e. Between 38 and 40 wks. gestation | 18% (51) |
| f. After 40 wks. gestation | 1.1% (3) |
12. Did one or more of your multiples experience complications at birth?
- | | |
|--------------|------------------|
| a. Yes | 38% (106) |
| b. No | 62% (171) |
13. Nature of birth complications
- | | |
|----------------------|------------------|
| a. Long term | 13% (27) |
| b. Short term | 60% (127) |
| c. No complications | 28% (59) |
14. Are all the multiples still living?
- | | |
|---------------|------------------|
| a. Yes | 99% (285) |
| b. No | 0 |
| c. Some | 1% (2) |
15. Did you work prior to becoming a mother/father of multiples?
- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| a. Yes, full-time | 75% (214) |
| b. Yes, part-time | 16% (45) |
| c. No | 10% (28) |
16. Did your spouse work prior to becoming a mother/father of multiples?
- | | |
|--------------------------|------------------|
| a. Yes, full-time | 96% (276) |
| b. Yes, part-time | 3% (8) |
| c. No | 1% (3) |
17. After your multiples were born, did you work outside the home?
- | | |
|---|------------------|
| a. Yes, full-time | 46% (106) |
| b. Yes, part-time | 24% (55) |
| c. No, however I work full time at home | 11% (26) |
| d. No, however I work part-time at home | 18% (42) |
18. After your multiples were born, did your spouse work outside the home?
- | | |
|--|------------------|
| a. Yes, full-time | 91% (260) |
| b. Yes, part-time | 3% (8) |
| c. No, but work full-time at home | 1% (3) |
| d. No, but work part-time at home | 0 |
| e. No, they are/were stay-at-home parent | 5% (14) |
19. How has having multiples had an effect on your marriage?
- | | |
|---|------------------|
| a. Decreased marital stress | 1% (2) |
| b. Slightly decreased marital stress | 4% (11) |
| c. No effect | 14% (38) |
| d. Slightly increased marital stress | 45% (125) |

e. Increased marital stress	37% (103)
20. Stress levels at newborn stage (birth to 6 weeks)	
a. Increase in stress	78% (217)
b. Decrease in stress	4% (10)
c. About the same amount of stress	19% (52)
d. Not applicable (was separated/divorced)	0
21. Stress levels from 6 weeks to 18 months	
a. Increase in stress	36% (100)
b. Decrease in stress	23% (65)
c. About the same amount of stress	38% (105)
d. Multiples not yet this age	3% (8)
e. Not applicable (was separated/divorced)	0.4% (1)
22. Stress levels at toddler stage (18 months to 3 years)	
a. Increase in stress	22% (60)
b. Decrease in stress	21% (58)
c. About the same amount of stress	26% (71)
d. Multiples not yet this age	30% (84)
e. Not applicable (was separated/divorced)	1% (3)
23. Stress levels at preschool age	
a. Increase in stress	7% (18)
b. Decrease in stress	18% (51)
c. About the same amount of stress	19% (53)
d. Multiples not yet this age	54% (159)
e. Not applicable (was separated/divorced)	1% (4)
24. Stress levels at school age	
a. Increase in stress	7% (20)
b. Decrease in stress	11% (31)
c. About the same amount of stress	13% (34)
d. Multiples not yet this age	67% (182)
e. Not applicable (was separated/divorced)	2% (5)
25. Stress levels when multiples were adults	
a. Increase in stress	2% (6)
b. Decrease in stress	3% (9)
c. About the same amount of stress	2% (6)
d. Multiples not yet this age	92% (249)
e. Not applicable (was separated/divorced)	1% (2)
26. Rank level of stress as it relates to marriage	
A. Conception of the multiples	
a. Not at all stressful	42% (118)
b. Somewhat stressful	15% (42)
c. Moderately stressful	17% (48)
d. Very stressful	17% (48)
e. Not applicable	8% (23)

B. Birth of the multiples		
a. Not at all stressful	14%	(39)
b. Somewhat stressful	3%	(108)
c. Moderately stressful	23%	(65)
d. Very stressful	23%	(64)
e. Not applicable	1%	(2)
C. Time required in daily care of multiples		
a. Not at all stressful	9%	(26)
b. Somewhat stressful	38%	(106)
c. Moderately stressful	27%	(74)
d. Very stressful	25%	(69)
e. Not applicable	1%	(1)
D. Financial hardships due to medical costs of multiples		
a. Not at all stressful	20%	(56)
b. Somewhat stressful	37%	(103)
c. Moderately stressful	22%	(60)
d. Very stressful	21%	(59)
e. Not applicable	1%	(1)
E. Spousal jealousy due to amount of time taken by the multiples		
a. Not at all stressful	60%	(166)
b. Somewhat stressful	19%	(52)
c. Moderately stressful	10%	(27)
d. Very stressful	5%	(15)
e. Not applicable	6%	(17)
F. Spousal jealousy due to the strength of relationship with multiples		
a. Not at all stressful	72%	(199)
b. Somewhat stressful	13%	(35)
c. Moderately stressful	15%	(13)
d. Very stressful	2%	(6)
e. Not applicable	9%	(25)
G. Distribution of parenting duties		
a. Not at all stressful	22%	(62)
b. Somewhat stressful	34%	(95)
c. Moderately stressful	24%	(68)
d. Very stressful	18%	(50)
e. Not applicable	1%	(3)
H. Distribution of housekeeping duties		
a. Not at all stressful	18%	(49)
b. Somewhat stressful	34%	(94)
c. Moderately stressful	26%	(73)
d. Very stressful	22%	(60)
e. Not applicable	1%	(1)

I. Lack of sleep	
a. Not at all stressful	14% (39)
b. Somewhat stressful	29% (80)
c. Moderately stressful	25% (68)
d. Very stressful	32% (89)
e. Not applicable	1% (2)
J. Employment status of one or both parents	
a. Not at all stressful	39% (107)
b. Somewhat stressful	27% (75)
c. Moderately stressful	16% (45)
d. Very stressful	13% (36)
e. Not applicable	5% (14)
K. Decreased romance in the marital relationship	
a. Not at all stressful	19% (53)
b. Somewhat stressful	36% (99)
c. Moderately stressful	19% (53)
d. Very stressful	25% (69)
e. Not applicable	1% (23)
L. Decreased intimacy in the marital relationship	
a. Not at all stressful	20% (56)
b. Somewhat stressful	32% (89)
c. Moderately stressful	20% (55)
d. Very stressful	26% (72)
e. Not applicable	1% (4)
M. Fertility treatments prior to conception	
a. Not at all stressful	9% (24)
b. Somewhat stressful	9% (25)
c. Moderately stressful	12% (37)
d. Very stressful	17% (47)
e. Not applicable	52% (144)
N. Other medical issues	
a. Not at all stressful	14% (37)
b. Somewhat stressful	12% (30)
c. Moderately stressful	9% (24)
d. Very stressful	8% (22)
e. Not applicable	56% (146)
27. At what point as parents of multiples did you feel the most stress on your marriage. (open-ended question)	
a. NB to 6 months	57% (142)
b. 6 months to 1 year	12% (30)
c. 2 – 5 years	16% (39)
d. > 5 years	5% (12)
e. Constant	4% (11)
f. No stress	2% (4)

- g. When returned to work 2% (5)
 - h. Prior to conception 2% (6)
28. At what point as parents of multiples did you feel the least stress on your marriage. (open-ended question)
- a. NB to 6 months 18% (39)
 - b. 6 months to 1 year 21% (44)
 - c. **2 – 5 years 27% (58)**
 - d. > 5 years 17% (36)
 - e. Constant 7% (14)
 - f. No stress 3% (6)
 - g. During pregnancy 8% (5)
29. What type of NOMOTC membership best describes you?
- a. **Member of a local club 69% (192)**
 - b. Member of more than one local club 7% (20)
 - c. Individual Affiliate member 1% (2)
 - d. Professional Affiliate member 0
 - e. Not a member of NOMOTC 23% (64)

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Research Interpretation
 Effect of Multiples on Marital Stress

As Mothers of Multiples many of us are aware of the stress that is placed on our marriages and relationships on a daily basis. Back in 2012, the Effect of Multiples on Marital Stress survey was launched. The objective of the survey was to measure how raising multiples changes our relationships. The survey was open to both mothers and fathers of multiples.

The survey had a total of 306 respondents. Not all respondents answered the initial question of whether or not they were still married to their spouse, so statistically the survey may not be accurately reporting percentages. 93.7% of the respondents were still married, and 6.3% reported that they were either not married or separated or divorced. The vast majority of respondents had twins (92.2%) while there were smaller percentages of triplets (6.1%) and quadruplets (0.3%). A small percentage had multiple sets of multiples (1.4%). Only 1 respondent had adopted their multiples, and 18 (40%) had used some type of fertility treatment to get pregnant.

Respondents who reported that they were divorced or separated were asked how old their multiples were at the time of their divorce or separation. 20% reported that their multiples were less than 1 year old, 26% reported that their multiples were between 1 and 2 years old, 40% were between 5 and 10 years old, 6% were between 10 and 20 years old, and 6% were older than 20 years old. Not all respondents who answered the question about being divorced or separated answered this question (15 out 19).

Most of the respondents (74.6%) worked full time prior to the birth of the multiples, with 15.7% working part time. After the birth of their multiples, 46.3% worked full time, and 24% worked part time. Again, not all respondents (77 skipped the question) answered this question. Most of the spouses also worked full time before (96.2%) and after (91.2%) the birth of their multiples.

The average age of the women at the time of their marriage was 29, while for the men; it was slightly older at 30. The majority (55.3%) of the multiples were born between the third and sixth year of marriage. 20.1% were born

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during the first two years of marriage, 16% were born the seventh and tenth years of marriage, 5.5% were born between the eleventh and twentieth year of marriage, 2.0% were born before marriage and 1.0% were born after the 20th year of marriage.

Respondents were asked about the multiple birth experience and the unique stressors associated with it, such as NICU stays, medical complications, and other factors that contributed to marital stress or difficulties. 37.5% of the multiples were born before 35 weeks gestation. With 1.1% earlier than 26 weeks, 8.9% between 26 and 30 weeks, and 27.5% between 31 and 34 weeks. 43.2% of the multiples were born between 35 and 37 weeks, and 18.2% between 38 and 40 weeks, 1.1% report that their multiples were born after 40 weeks.

38.3% reported that one or both of their multiples encountered some type of complication after their birth. 139 respondents reported NICU stays of varying lengths. There were 4 instances of Twin to Twin Transfusion Syndrome, 3 Cardiac Surgeries, and 6 Digestive surgeries.

Regarding the impact of having Multiples most respondents felt that it did increase stress in their marriage or relationships. 36.9% felt that it increased stress, 44.8% felt that it slightly increased stress, 13.6% reported no change in stress, 3.9% felt that it slightly decreased stress, and 0.7% felt that it decreased stress. Not surprisingly the highest amount of stress was felt by the respondents to be during the first 6 weeks after the birth of the multiples. From 6 weeks to 18 months, the stress levels changed somewhat with 35.8% reporting that their stress levels increased as the multiples got older. 23.3% reported feeling that their stress levels decreased, and 37.6% felt that it was about the same as during the first 6 weeks. When the multiples reached toddlerhood there was a change in reported stress levels, with 25.7% saying that their stress levels were about the same, 21.7% felt it was about the same, and 21% felt it had decreased. There was a large amount of respondents whose multiples had not yet reached toddler age.

Regarding Preschool and School aged multiples, most of the respondents multiples have not yet reached that age, but of the ones who had, most report the same amount of marital stress (19.3%), some report a decrease (18.5%), and a small percentage (6.5%) report an increase in the Preschool age respondents. For School age, the results are similar, with 12.5% feeling the stress is about the same, 11.4% feeling a decrease, and 7.4% feeling an increase in marital stress.

For adult aged multiples, based on the small sample of 21 responses, 9 (43%) felt that the stress they felt in their marriage decreased. While equal amounts, 6 (28%) felt that stress increased, or stayed the same. The survey asked what the most stressful parts of the Multiple birth experience were, from conception to adulthood. Lack of sleep ranked highest among respondents on the list of stress factors. Next on the list was a feeling of decreased intimacy in their relationship. Also cited was the amount of time needed for the daily care of multiples, a lack of romance, and financial hardships. Many of the respondents felt that once the babies began to sleep on a regular schedule that their stress levels decreased, and when the multiples reached Preschool age.