Published in final edited form as:

Adopt Q. 2019 ; 22(1): 29–52. doi:10.1080/10926755.2018.1488332.

Minding the (Information) Gap: What do Emerging Adult Adoptees Want to Know about their Birth Parents?

Gretchen Miller Wrobel,

Department of Psychology, Bethel University

Harold D. Grotevant

Department of Psychology, University of Massachusetts Amherst

Abstract

The formation of an adoption information gap was examined for a group of 169 emerging adults ($M = 25.0$ years) who were adopted as infants. Participants completed interviews and questionnaires at adolescence and emerging adulthood (late teens to 20's). The Adoption Curiosity Pathway model guided research questions about formation of an adoption information gap, which exists when there is a difference between what an adopted person knows and what he or she desires to know, regarding his or her adoption. In addition, specific issues were identified about which emerging adults were curious. Differences in these specific issues were examined across gender and openness arrangement with birth parents at emerging adulthood. The most frequently sought information was medical and health history. Logistic regression analyses revealed that the formation of an adoption information gap, which contains the specific items of curiosity, was more likely for those who were less satisfied with the amount of openness with birth parents during both adolescence and emerging adulthood. Implications for practice are presented.

Keywords

Adoption; Longitudinal; Family Relationships; Identity; Transitions to Adulthood

Adoptive families take many diverse forms. They can contain both biological and adopted children, birth siblings adopted together, and children of a different racial background from their parents. Adoptive parents can be single or married, and in relationships that vary by sexual orientation. Connections between birth and adoptive families can vary by the type of openness arrangements with birth relatives, ranging from no contact, to contact mediated by an agency, to direct face to face contact (Grotevant et al., 2007). In the midst of this diversity exist some constants: there is a legal transfer of parental rights from birth to adoptive parents; adoptive families reside in an adoptive kinship network (AKN) that includes the adopted person at the center, but also includes birth family, adoptive family, and extended family members of each (Grotevant & McRoy, 1998); and adopted persons engage in the psychological work of thinking about their own adoption (Irhammer & Cederblad, 2000; Kohler, Grotevant, & McRoy, 2002; Wrobel, Grotevant, & McRoy, 2004). At some point,

most adopted individuals consider their desire for more information about their adoptions or birth families. As a result, some adopted persons are content with the information they have and do not identify any desire for additional adoption-related information (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009). Yet for others, adoption-related reflection results in the identification of desired yet unknown information, creating an adoption information gap between what is already known and what is desired. Adoption-related curiosity is focused on the unknown information and may provide the motivation to seek out that information (Wrobel, Grotevant, Samek & Von Korff, 2013). Recognizing the adoption-related information needs of emerging adults can lead to an understanding of how that information can facilitate adoptees' self-development and well-being and is of interest to adopted individuals, adoption professionals and therapists alike.

All people are curious. It is a part of being human, provides incentive to pursue answers to questions of daily life, and provides motivation to engage in new experiences (Reio, Petrosko, Wiswell & Thongsukmag, 2006). Adoption-related curiosity begins in childhood and remains part of one's experience throughout the life course (Brodzinsky, 2011; Wrobel, Ayers-Lopez, Grotevant, McRoy, & Friedrich, 1996). Curiosity is an especially important part of emerging adulthood, which is characterized by identity exploration and the desire to learn about one's self; this process frequently evokes a wide range of questions (Arnett, 2006). For adopted individuals, in addition to identity exploration in other domains such as occupational choice or values, the exploration of an adoptive identity is undertaken. Questions about one's adoption and birth family reflect desired information that can facilitate the development of an adoptive identity. Incorporation of an adoptive identity is important as emerging adults negotiate the formation of their chosen identities (Grotevant & Von Korff, 2011). Understanding what information emerging adults desire is important for supporting them during this stage of exploration, either by helping identify what is important to them or helping them obtain desired information.

Adoption Reflection and Curiosity

Thinking about adoption can influence the identification of an adoption information gap and its associated adoption-related curiosity. Knowing the content of that gap has important implications for information seeking. Specific information may be assumed by the adopted person to be easy or difficult to obtain because of perceived barriers and facilitators, which can influence motivation whether or not to seek out that information (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009; Wrobel et al, 2013).

The intense reflective thinking engaged in by adopted persons helps them decide what else they would like to know about their adoptions. Irhammer and Cederblad (2000) identified adoption-related reflective thinking, termed an "inner search" (p. 154), in a group of internationally adopted Swedish adolescents. Their study focused on thinking about one's biological family. Seventy percent of the adolescents thought about their biological family, with more females than males represented in this group. No difference was found across age at adoption, knowledge about the biological family, and adoptive family composition. Quality of family relationships was not associated with thinking about the biological family.

Of those who had thought about their biological family, more than half expressed curiosity by wanting to have more information about them.

Reflective thinking about adoption occurs into adulthood. Müller, Gibbs and Ariely (2002) found that, for a group of adopted adults, thinking about birth parents was influenced by adoptees' feelings about adoption as an adolescent and their age. Those who had more negative feelings about adoption as teenagers and who were older at the time of the study were more likely to think about birth parents. More females than males thought about birth mothers, but this difference did not extend to thinking about birth fathers. In addition to Irhammer and Cederblad (2000) and Müller et al. (2002), Tieman, van der Ende, and Verhulst (2008) also found a greater focus on adoption by females. In contrast to Müller et al. (2002), the adult adoptee literature more typically focuses on the outcomes of searching for birth relatives (Howe & Feast, 2001; Sobol & Cardiff, 1983; Tieman, et al., 2008). This focus assumes some adoption reflection has taken place in order to make the search decision (Müller & Perry, 2001).

Satisfaction with Openness and Curiosity

Findings from the Minnesota Texas Adoption Research Project (MTARP) have revealed that, both at adolescence (Mendenhall, Berge, Wrobel, Grotevant, & McRoy, 2004) and emerging adulthood (Farr, Grant-Marsey, Musante, Grotevant, & Wrobel, 2014), adopted persons who were engaged in birth family contact, were more satisfied with their openness arrangements than those without contact. In contrast, less satisfaction with contact may be experienced because of a desire for more information about one's adoption that cannot be obtained within the context of one's current contact arrangements. Yet, one must take caution in assuming that all adopted persons with less contact desire to have more. Both adolescents and emerging adults with lesser contact reported satisfaction in the neutral range. The exception was emerging adults with contact without in-person meetings, who described dissatisfaction (Farr et al, 2014). A neutral response does not represent strong dissatisfaction but may signify that the issue of contact is less salient for some than for others (Mendenhall et al, 2004). These results have important implications for the study of adoption-related curiosity, as not all adopted persons within a particular category of openness experience the same level of satisfaction about their adoption. Thus, a desire for more information can vary as well, in direct contrast to the assumption that if you do not have unknown information you will assuredly want the information. This is not always the case. Those with little information who do not desire additional contact or information about their adoptions have been less recognized in the literature.

Emerging Adulthood and Curiosity

Emerging adulthood (Arnett, 2004, 2006), lasting from the late teens to the late twenties, is a developmental time frame during which adoption-related reflection can have particular impact; it has only recently received attention in the adoption literature (Farr et al, 2014; Grant-Marsney, Grotevant, & Sayer, 2015; Musante, 2010; Siegel, 2012; Skinner-Drawz, Wrobel, Grotevant, & Von Korff, 2011; Tieman et al., 2008; Wrobel et al., 2013). In addition to identity exploration, this developmental period is characterized by increasing

independence and responsibility which bring about change in family relationships, as parents and their children move toward interactions based on an understanding that the child has become an adult (Aquilino, 2006). For adopted persons, this can include taking on the role of managing information about their adoptions, independent of their parents. Adoption-related reflection may lead some to desire more information about their adoptions, fueling curiosity as legal barriers to gaining adoption records prior to the age of 18 are first removed (Wrobel et al., 2013). Emerging adults can also independently negotiate relationships within the adoptive kinship network, in contrast to adolescence, when their adoptive parents made such decisions. As such, emerging adulthood is a period of change during which access to adoption-related information can have important personal impact.

Theoretical Framework: Adoption Curiosity Pathway (ACP)

The Adoption Curiosity Pathway (ACP, Wrobel & Dillon, 2009) provides a process model for understanding the expression of adoption-related curiosity that focuses first on the identification of an adoption information gap and secondly, on the expression of adoption-related curiosity that follows gap formation. The ACP applies Loewenstein's (1994) conceptualization of curiosity, including an information gap, to the unique context of adoption and desire for adoption-specific information. There are three steps on the pathway: first, an adoption information gap is identified; second, the intensity of curiosity is determined; and lastly, desired adoption information is sought. Curiosity is a potentially important part of adoptive life and can provide energy to engage in information seeking. Not all adopted persons will exhibit the same intensity of curiosity about their adoptions. Some will exhibit none at all, and for others, curiosity may wax and wane over time. Even the content of curiosity is unique to the individual. The ACP provides a model for studying the impact of curiosity that accounts for the unique, individual qualities curiosity possesses for each adopted person. This model will provide a lens through which adopted persons, adoption professionals and therapists can understand and communicate about the experience of adopted emerging adults.

Developmentally, what is important to a person will change. Young children may be satisfied with their adoption story as told by their parents, adolescents forming an identity may want to know why their birth parents placed them for adoption, and young adults parenting their own biological child may desire more medical history from their birth parents. Emerging adults are in a time of transition and as such may desire more information about the complexity of the adoption kinship network and their role in negotiating those relationships. Little description resides in the literature regarding the specific items about which adopted persons are curious. Most often curiosity is described in terms of broad categories such as curiosity about birth parents or birth families. In contrast, Wrobel and Dillon (2009) identified the top five items of specific curiosity mentioned by a group of adolescents, adopted domestically as infants in the late 1970s to early 1980s. In rank order they included 1) birth parents' reasons for placing the child for adoption, 2) whether or not one's birth parent was parenting other children, 3) birth parent appearance, 4) how the birth parent is doing overall, and 5) birth parent personality. Little is known regarding the specific content about which emerging adults are curious, which is the primary focus in the present paper.

Satisfying adoption-related curiosity has often been tied to a search for birth parents with intention to reunite (Tieman et al., 2008). We have broadened our conception of searching in order to satisfy curiosity into the more inclusive construct of information seeking. Information seeking is defined as “the gathering of information previously unknown to the adopted person about his or her adoption and birth family” (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009, p. 223); it includes but is not limited to seeking information that will lead to reunion with birth parents. Desired information is specific and can be gained from differing sources including previously unseen records, adoptive parents, and direct contact with birth family members. The ACP views information seeking as the behavioral outcome of curiosity; it occurs when the intensity of curiosity is great enough to provide the motivation for the adopted person to take action. The strength of the ACP is that it accounts for adoption-related curiosity in all types of adoptive families.

Wrobel et al. (2013) focused on the information seeking behavior of emerging adults with an identified information gap. Curiosity was positively related to information seeking behavior about both birth mothers and birth fathers. Information seeking was not only influenced by curiosity but the perception of the context in which information seeking takes place. Partial mediation of external facilitators (e.g. offers of assistance from adoptive parents or others) predicted increased information seeking focused on both birth mothers and birth fathers. Barriers to information seeking played different roles for birth mother and birth father information seeking. For information seeking about birth mothers, there was partial mediation in the association between internal barriers (e.g. not feeling ready or not wanting to hurt a family member) with increased curiosity and decreased information seeking. For information about birth fathers, curiosity fully mediated the impact of identified external barriers (e.g. agency policies or fees) on information seeking. The barriers increased curiosity and also increased information seeking.

Focus on the Adoption Information Gap

The ACP begins with the identification of an adoption information gap, which is the focus of this study. Each young person has a distinctive set of information regarding his or her adoption. This information is the individual’s adoption information reference point that delineates the gap. When the information that an individual knows is considered to be ‘enough’, there is no gap. Wrobel and Dillon (2009) found among the adolescents in their study, those without adoption information gaps fell into two categories: those who ‘knew everything’ because a knowledge gap had been filled and those who indicated that there was nothing else they wished to know. When the adopted person desires to know information they do not possess, an information gap is formed. Birth family members are one source of adoption-related information. An information gap may be associated with lowered satisfaction with current contact to the extent that the adoptee feels the current contact arrangements are making that information difficult to obtain. Gaps can appear any time and can re-form after being satisfied. Once previously unknown information is gained, a new adoption information reference point is delineated; this new reference point can be used to determine if more information is desired.

The Current Study

The ACP has great value for understanding and communicating about the experience of being an adopted emerging adult. The current study is the first to identify specific adoption-related content about which emerging adults are curious. In addition, examination of the ACP by focusing on predictors related to the formation of the information gap is undertaken... Using the ACP as a theoretical base, hypotheses will be tested about the formation of an adoption information gap in emerging adulthood. It is hypothesized that emerging adults who identify an adoption information gap will think more frequently about their birth parents, will have less satisfaction with the contact in their adoptions during adolescence and emerging adulthood, and will be female.

Method

Participants

Participants included 169 emerging adults who participated at Wave 3 of the Minnesota-Texas Adoption Research Project (MTARP) (Grotevant & McRoy, 1998). Data from Wave 2 (adolescence) and Wave 3 (emerging adulthood) were used. MTARP is a longitudinal study focusing on the impact of contact between adoptive and birth family members on the development of members of the adoptive kinship network: the adopted person, adoptive family members and birth family members (Grotevant & McRoy, 1998; Grotevant, McRoy, Wrobel, & Ayers-Lopez, 2013). All children were adopted in early infancy by same-race families through private adoption agencies in the United States. At Wave 2 (1996 – 2001), participants included the adoptive parents and target adopted adolescents from 177 of the original 190 adoptive families, including 156 adopted adolescents (75 boys and 81 girls), ranging in age from 11 to 20 years (mean = 15.7). The Wave 3 sample was collected between 2005 and 2008 and included 150 adoptive mothers, 133 adoptive fathers, and 169 adopted emerging adults. The adopted emerging adults (Wave 3) were between the ages of 21 and 30 (mean = 24.95); 87 were males and 82 were females. The majority of emerging adults identified as White; four identified as Hispanic/Mexican American and one identified as Black/African American. Approximately 20% of the adopted emerging adults were married and 20% had children. For a full description of Wave 2 participants see Grotevant, Perry, and McRoy (2005) and for Wave 3 participants see Farr, Grant-Marsney, Musante, Grotevant, and Wrobel (2014).

Procedure

At Wave 2, adoptive families were seen in their homes during a single session that typically lasted 4 to 5 hours. The session included individual interviews with each parent and the target adopted child (approximately 1 to 2 hours each), administration of several questionnaires, and administration of a family interaction task. Some family members were interviewed by telephone (16 fathers, 20 mothers, 14 adolescents, 2 siblings) when it was impossible to gather everyone together for the home visit (e.g., living out of the U.S., adolescent away at college). Interviews were subsequently transcribed verbatim from audiotape; names and identifying information were changed in order to protect confidentiality of participants.

At Wave 3, adopted emerging adults completed interviews via secure, password-protected internet chat-sites and were administered online questionnaires protected by secure socket layer web technology. Participants first completed the online interviews which were conducted by trained interviewers. They were then able to complete the online questionnaires. Paper-and-pencil measures and telephone interviews were made available to the few participants who did not have internet access or who had disabilities that precluded their use of the internet. Compensation was \$75 for the questionnaires and \$75 for the online chat interviews. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Boards of the University of Minnesota and the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Measures

Adoption Dynamics Questionnaire (Wave 3).—The Adoption Dynamics Questionnaire (ADQ: Benson, Sharma, & Roehlkepartain, 1994) consists of 44 items that assess positive affect about one's own adoption ($\alpha=.92$, 20 items), preoccupation with own adoption history ($\alpha=.84$, 17 items), and negative experience with adoption ($\alpha=.70$, 7 items).

Adopted adolescent interview (Wave 2).—The adolescent interview at Wave 2 elicited open discussion of the adolescent's experiences, feelings, knowledge, and attitudes about his or her adoption, adoptive identity, adoptive family situation, and birth parents. It included general questions about adoption as well as questions specific to the openness arrangement in the adolescent's adoption. The openness topics included the breadth and diversity of persons within the adoptive kinship network with whom the child has current or past contact, changes in level of openness, withholding of information or contact by parents, frequency of contact, and feelings regarding birth family members, such as satisfaction with the relationship, satisfaction with openness, and desired future level of contact.

Adopted emerging adult interview (Wave 3).—Emerging adult participants completed a semi-structured interview that included questions about school and occupation, religion, close relationships and adoption. Data used in this paper come from the section of the interview that focused on adoption and included questions about adoption-related curiosity and reflection. The entire online interview was administered in two to three sessions and typically lasted between 3 and 6 hours.

Coding

Coding schemes were developed to assess types of adoption-related information about which the emerging adult was curious. Openness arrangements experienced in the adoptive kinship network were also coded. Ratings for all variables were based on the entire interview transcript. All coders read and coded a minimum of two criterion interview transcripts and were required to attain percent agreement of .80 or better before coding independently. Thereafter, ongoing reliability checks were made, and at least 50% of transcripts were rated by two coders. Coders met to compare ratings and resolve disagreements through discussion for the transcripts that were double-coded. When there were disagreements, the final rating was based on consensus discussion between the two coders. Attainment of 80% reliability was met throughout the coding process.

Variables

Openness arrangement (Wave 3).—Adoptees reported whether they had any contact with their birth mother, birth father, and/or another birth family member in adolescence. Openness arrangements were coded into four categories using adoptees' interviews: (1) no contact: no contact with birth relatives has occurred and no information has been shared beyond six months post-placement, (2) stopped contact: information sharing and contact had stopped by time of the interview, (3) contact without meetings: contact is occurring, but the adoptee has not had face-to-face contact with birth parents, or adopted adolescent and/or family has had mediated or personal contact with birth parent, but adolescent has not had face-to-face contact; contact has not stopped, and (4) contact with meetings: adoptee has had face-to-face contact with birth parent and contact has not stopped.

Adoption information gap (Wave 3).—The presence of an adoption information gap was identified from responses to the Wave 3 emerging adult interview. The participants were asked what more would they like to know about their birth family. If more information was desired, the emerging adult was coded as having an adoption information gap. Emerging adults were coded as having no adoption information gap if they indicated that what they currently knew was enough or they had no desire to learn anything new. The information gap was coded separately for the existence of an information gap about their birth mother and birth father. Complete interview protocols are available upon request from the first author.

Content of adoption-related curiosity (Wave 3).—From the verbatim transcripts, an exhaustive list of 20 adoption-related content categories was developed. A positive endorsement of an item was given if the content category was mentioned by the emerging adult. The content of curiosity was coded separately for what they wanted to know about their birth mother and birth father.

Satisfaction with openness (Wave 2 and Wave 3).—Satisfaction with openness arrangement was defined in terms of the adopted person's satisfaction with the type and amount of contact he or she was having with each birth parent, whether that involved contact or not. A person with no contact could be very satisfied that there is none, or could be very dissatisfied, wishing for much more contact or a different type of contact. Likewise, adopted persons with contact could be satisfied with the level of contact they are having or dissatisfied with it, wishing for either more or less contact. At W2, interviews were rated by project coders on a five-point Likert scale which included: very dissatisfied (0), dissatisfied (1), neutral (2), satisfied (3), and very satisfied (4). At W3, participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with openness directly using the scale. This rating captured adopted persons' satisfaction with openness arrangement in their adoption, not their adoption experiences as a whole.

Thinking about birth parent (Wave 3).—Two items from the ADQ preoccupation scale "How often do you think about your birth mother?" and "How often do you think about your birth father?" were used to determine the frequency with which the adopted person thought about each birth parent ($\alpha = .76$, 3 items). For each item, respondents could choose from

never, less than once a month, about once a month, 2–3 times a month, about once a week, a few times a week, and every day.

Results

Two sets of analyses are reported. In the first, logistic regression was used to predict the probability that a participant would have an adoption information gap for those who participated at both W2 and W3. Secondly, the content of curiosity at emerging adulthood was identified for all those who participated at W3, and differences in that content across openness arrangement and gender were tested.

Prediction of an Information Gap

Two logistic regression (LR) models were estimated: one with regard to an information gap about the emerging adult's birth mother and one with regard to birth father. Each LR model predicted the probability of a birth parent information gap at emerging adulthood based on satisfaction with openness with that birth parent at Wave 2 and Wave 3, thinking about that birth parent at Wave 3, age and gender. The dichotomous dependent variable was presence/absence of an information gap about the birth mother or birth father at Wave 3. At step one of the regression analysis, age, gender and W2 satisfaction with openness were entered. At step two, W3 thinking about adoption was entered. At step three, W3 satisfaction with openness was entered. The variable "thinking about adoption" was the first W3 variable entered with the idea that such reflection would add significantly to the model. There were no significant gender differences between the no information group and information gap group for either birth mother ($\chi^2(1, n=167)=1.08$) or birth father ($\chi^2(1, n=167)=3.98$). Descriptive statistics for predictor variables as a function of an information gap for birth mothers and birth fathers are provided in Table 1. Table 2 provides the intercorrelations for all logistic regression variables.

Prediction of a Birth Mother Information Gap.—The overall regression model predicting a birth mother information gap was statistically significant [Nagelkerke $R^2=.344$, $\chi^2(4, N=123)=34.40$, $p=.0001$] and was able to correctly classify 90.6 % of those who had a birth mother information gap at emerging adulthood and 47.4 % of those who did not, for an overall success rate of 77.2%. Table 3 shows the logistic regression coefficient, standard error, odds ratio, and Wald statistic for each of the predictors. Satisfaction with openness in the adoption at Wave 2 and Wave 3 were significant predictors of an information gap at emerging adulthood. The odds ratio for Wave 2 satisfaction of .44 indicates that odds of being in the gap group are .44 less with a one unit increase in satisfaction. In other words, the odds of having an information gap are decreased by 56% for every one unit increase in Wave 2 satisfaction. The odds ratio for Wave 3 satisfaction of .47 indicates that odds of having an information gap are .47 less for every one unit increase in Wave 3 satisfaction. In other words, the odds of having an information gap are decreased by 53% for every one unit increase in Wave 3 satisfaction. The odds ratio for gender was not statistically significant.

Prediction of a Birth Father Information Gap.—The overall regression model predicting a birth father information gap was statistically significant [Nagelkerke $R^2=.222$,

$\chi^2(4, N=114)=18.43, p=.002]$ and was able to correctly classify 95.3 % of those who had a birth father information gap at emerging adulthood and 28.6 % of those who did not, for an overall success rate of 78.9%. Table 3 displays the logistic regression coefficient, standard error, odds ratio, and Wald statistic for each of the predictors. Satisfaction with openness in the adoption at Wave 2 and Wave 3 were significant predictors of an information gap. The odds ratio for Wave 2 satisfaction of .61 indicates that the odds of being in the gap group are .61 less with a one unit increase in Wave 2 satisfaction. In other words, the odds of having an information gap are decreased by 39% for every one unit increase in satisfaction. The odds ratio for Wave 3 satisfaction with openness in the adoption of .42 indicates that odds of having an information gap are .42 less for every one unit increase in Wave 3 satisfaction. In other words, the odds of having an information gap are decreased by 59% for every one unit increase in satisfaction. The odds ratio for gender of was not statistically significant.

What are Emerging Adults Curious about in Relation to their Birth Parents?

For those individuals who identified an information gap about their birth mother ($n=111$) and birth father ($n=120$) at Wave 3, the specific content of that gap was examined. Curiosity content categories receiving endorsement from 15% or more of the participants with information gaps are listed for birth mothers in Table 4 and birth fathers in Table 5. The top four items of curiosity were the same for both birth mothers and birth fathers: first, medical information/health history; second, how the birth parents are doing; third, appearance/physical characteristics; and fourth, other children parented by the birth parent. A listing of the nine curiosity items receiving 15% endorsement revealed that the content of the list was the same for birth mothers and birth fathers with slight variation in ranking. Medical information/health history was by far the most identified item (51.3% for birth mothers; 57.5% for birth fathers) in comparison to second ranked “how the birth parent was doing” (31.5 % for birth mothers; 34.1% for birth fathers).

Curiosity about birth mother.—Significant gender differences were found for four items about which participants were curious, with females expressing more curiosity than males for the following items: ‘medical information/health history’ ($\chi^2(1, n=111)=4.74 p<.05$), ‘appearance/physical characteristics’ of the birth mother ($\chi^2(1, n=111)=6.63 p<.05$), and ‘other children being parented’ ($\chi^2(1, n=111)=6.97 p<.01$). ‘Birth mother interest in the child’ was also significant ($\chi^2(1, n=111)=6.69 p<.05$), but at 14.4 % did not meet the 15% endorsement threshold.

There were three categories that showed significant differences by Wave 3 openness arrangement. For the categories ‘medical information/health history’ ($\chi^2(3, n=111)=17.85 p<.0001$), and ‘appearance/physical characteristics’ ($\chi^2(3, n=111)=10.28 p<.05$) significantly fewer emerging adults who had the highest two levels of openness arrangements (ongoing direct or indirect contact) exhibited curiosity than those in the other openness arrangements (no contact or stopped contact). For ‘identifying information’ ($\chi^2(3, n=111)=11.23 p<.01$), there were significantly more emerging adults in the No Contact group than in the other openness arrangements

Curiosity about birth father.—With regard to curiosity about birth fathers, there were two gender differences (Table 2). More females (16.7%) expressed curiosity about other children he was parenting than did males (5.8%) ($\chi^2(1, n=120)=6.02$ $p<.05$). ‘Circumstances of conception’ was also significant ($\chi^2(1, n=120)=4.55$ $p<.05$) but at 5.8 % did not meet the 15% endorsement threshold. Of the 7 emerging adults who endorsed this item, 6 were males.

There was one category that showed significant differences by Wave 3 openness arrangement. For the category ‘medical information/health history’ ($\chi^2(3, n=120)=8.97$ $p<.05$), there were more emerging adults in the No Contact group than in the other openness arrangements.

Discussion

Curiosity about adoption is unique to each adopted person; the ACP provides a model for identifying content of that curiosity and allows for curiosity to change across time. Emerging adulthood, for adopted individuals, continues to be characterized by significant psychological work related to the gathering of adoption-related information. Coming of age in the 21st century (Arnett, 2006) includes learning how to manage family relationships as an adult (Aquilino, 2006). For adopted persons, those relationships reside within the complexity of the adoptive kinship network. Identifying questions about one’s adoption and birth family can help emerging adults understand the focus of their adoption-related curiosity; clarifying what they consider important information. It is necessary to identify an adoption information gap because the existence and content of a gap influences decision making about information seeking (Wrobel et al, 2013). Knowledge of an information gap and its contents is important information for therapists and adoption professionals who support emerging adults as they make information seeking decisions and is the basis from which emerging adults make decisions about when and how to seek out that information. De-identified quotes from project participants related to curiosity content are provided within parentheses in the following discussion.

Prediction of an Adoption Information Gap

As in adolescence (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009; Wrobel et al., 2004), emerging adults varied in their satisfaction with the amount and specific details about the adoption-related information they possessed. Hypotheses regarding Wave 2 and Wave 3 satisfaction were supported with regard to information gaps about both birth mothers and birth fathers. Those who were more satisfied with the amount of contact in their adoptions were less likely to have an information gap. If this satisfaction lessens, it may lead to an information gap about birth parents. This result supports the ACP model, which states that not all persons are curious about their adoption. Our analyses do not dictate a causal relationship between satisfaction with openness and the formation of an information gap. For some there may be a desire for more information but not a change in contact. Information can be sought and gained from a variety of sources that do not require a change in openness. The adopted person may find desired information from placement records, internet searches, birth certificates, or his or her adoptive parents. Those adopted persons with contact may find the information from birth

relatives with whom they already have a relationship. Those who do not have contact and view birth parents as holders of that information can be less satisfied with their current level of contact. It is important to remember that the relationship between desire for more adoption-related information than one possesses and satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's openness arrangement resides in the varied contexts in which adoption occurs.

Contrary to the stated hypothesis, thinking about the birth parent did not contribute to the formation of an adoption information gap. Satisfaction with openness with the birthmother and birth father was negatively correlated with thinking about each birth parent, suggesting that once you are satisfied with contact, you do not think about it as much, or if you are dissatisfied with contact you are more likely to think about it (Table 4). Satisfaction with the openness arrangement in one's adoption requires an evaluative reflection on one's experience of contact in the AKN, which includes the birth parent, thus it becomes a stronger predictor of an information gap than simply thinking about a specific birth parent.

In addition, females were not more likely than males to demonstrate an adoption information gap. This finding stands in contrast to studies showing that women are more interested than men in searching for their birth mother, which is a specific type of information seeking (e.g. Tieman et al., 2008). The creation of the adoption information gap places the adopted person on the ACP. While there may be no gender difference with regard to the creation of an information gap, those differences may occur once individuals move to seeking information. For example, females have a greater desire for information about other children being parented by their birth parents, and males have a greater interest in the circumstances of conception. For those without direct contact, previous research has indicated that females more often engage in a search for birth parents (Müller & Perry, 2001). For those with contact, the nature of the birth parent relationship can influence asking for information. A close relationship with the birth parent may make it easier for the adopted person to ask directly for more information as the need arises.

Curiosity Content

Most striking for this group of emerging adults is the desire for information related to their health history. It is clear that the desire for medical information about both the birth mother and birth father is important for this group of emerging adults, as the number of participants who want this information about their birth mother and birth father is 19.8% greater and 23.4% greater, respectively, than the second ranked "how they are doing." It is in this stage that reflection about one's adult life takes place and consideration of parenthood is undertaken (Arnett, 2004), increasing the relevance of knowing one's detailed medical history. The significantly greater interest by adopted women in medical/health history may be especially salient with regard to a parenting their own children ("I would like to have a little more medical historyespecially now that I have a child.") It is important to know what medical conditions may be represented in one's biological history so that genetic or health risks can be understood and anticipated. ("It'd be good to know if I have a history of cancer or anything in the family.") For those whose adoptions involve no contact or stopped contact, the lack of a path that includes access to this information may increase its importance (Wrobel et al., 2013). Curiosity about medical history can also increase because

of the dated nature of information contained in adoption records. Birth parents were typically young at placement and may not have experienced any significant medical concerns at that time. Knowing birth parents' health histories post placement will provide a more complete health picture.

Males and females had remarkably similar listings of curiosity content regarding their birth mothers and birth fathers, although birth mother appearance was one piece of knowledge that females wanted more frequently than males. Female appearance is strongly emphasized in American culture, so knowing who they resemble can be important for women. ("I always wonder what she looked like. Like if I look like her and stuff.") This piece of information was also desired more by those in the no or stopped contact groups, which is understandable, because adopted persons in these groups do not have current contact with their birth mothers. In addition, females more often wanted to know if their birth mother and birth father were parenting other children. What the birth parents' families look like in comparison to one's own adoptive family is of high interest. If the birth parent is parenting other children, one's position as a child in both families can be compared ("As far as any half-sibling I may have. I guess I'd like to meet them. Find out who they are, what they do. See if they ended up as successful as I did.") Though a small percentage endorsement (5.8%), males (n=6) were more curious than females (n=1) about the circumstances of their conception. Some adoptees viewed the absence of their birth father as his leaving the situation, so interest in circumstances of conception could be related to if the pregnancy was the result of one sexual encounter or a more longstanding relationship that was abandoned when pregnancy occurred ("The only thing I care about is if I was conceived out of love.... It would make me sad if I was born out of lust or rape.") Most importantly, both males and females are curious about their birth parents and, with few exceptions, curious about the same things.

The differences in curiosity reflected by openness arrangement also reflect the significant impact openness arrangement had on access to desired information. With respect to birth mothers, "interest in the adopted child" was not desired by those with face-to-face contact. This makes sense, since contact with the birth mother will allow the adopted child to directly evaluate her interest. For birth fathers, the following categories of information were not desired by those with face-to-face contact: medical/health history, reasons for placing child, and circumstance of conception. When face-to-face contact exists, these basic items of information may be known by the adopted person or do not seem important to know and therefore do not appear in the adoption information gap

Medical information/health history of both the birth mother and birth father was desired most by those emerging adults with no contact in their adoption arrangement. Yet, there were emerging adults in all openness arrangements (except males with face-to-face contact) who desired this information. It is important to note that having face-to-face contact does not keep one from being curious, it only provides additional avenues for obtaining the information. It also means that once certain, more direct, questions are answered, more subtle and complex ones might emerge. Medical information is one such example; the desire for more detailed information can increase when it becomes relevant to the adopted person's experience. In emerging adulthood, medical information can become important as

contemplation of becoming a parent increases or personal health issues are encountered. A child or adolescent with contact may not see the relevance of medical information and may have asked for information more pertinent to their developmental stage.

This representation of curiosity content across all openness groups is important validation of the unique content of individual adoption-related information gaps. It cannot be assumed that a specific type of information will be universally known by all members of an openness group, as exemplified by desire for medical information. Thus the set point of known information used to determine an information gap is unique to each individual.

Implications for Practitioners

For those who express a desire for more adoption-related information, identifying specific content of desired information can provide a starting point for discussion with adoptive parents, adoption professionals and counselors who support adopted emerging adults in their identity development, information seeking and management, as an adult, of complex relationships within the adoptive kinship network. Specific suggestions for practitioners follow:

1. A coherent sense of adoptive identity is one in which the components of one's story fit together reasonably well, without major gaps or contradictions (Grotevant & Von Korff, 2011). For young people with many questions about their background and desire to seek information or contact, professionals can support their process by normalizing the experience and providing resources (e.g., books, websites) and referrals (e.g., to adoption-competent therapists, adoption community groups online, and conferences).
2. Though much attention is given to those who would like to know more about their adoptions, it is important to acknowledge that there is a group of adopted emerging adults, with and without contact, who express no desire for any additional information. It may be those persons are waiting for a more opportune time to seek out information when there is a favorable balance between perceived barriers and facilitators to obtaining information (Wrobel et al., 2013) or, upon reflection, decide that what they know is enough. When supporting adoptive persons, this lack of desire for more information should not be viewed as problematic.
3. Having information can help the emerging adult negotiate the complex relationships in the adoptive kinship network. Especially salient at emerging adulthood, as identified by a desire to know about other children birth parents are parenting, is establishing one's self as an adult in a complex adoption network that includes both birth and adoptive family members. Yet, these findings, which demonstrate variability in interest about specific topics, suggest that those who support adopted emerging adults should not assume that all possess similar knowledge or are interested in the same topics.
4. It is also important to acknowledge that those who have face-to-face contact with birth parents can also be curious and identify additional information they desire

to know. With understanding of how an adoption-related information gap is formed and the contents it contains, we can better support adopted persons on their journey through emerging adulthood.

5. Emerging adults in this study showed a significant interest in obtaining more information about the genetic, medical, and health backgrounds of their birth relatives. Thus, it is important for adoption agencies to seek and retain as much health background information as possible and to make it available to adoptees without barriers. Even when there is no contact with the adoptee's birth relatives, agencies should facilitate updating of records and serve as a conduit for the communication of information.

Strengths and Limitations

An important strength of this study is that the investigation was explicitly guided by theory, the Adoption Curiosity Pathway model (Wrobel & Dillon, 2009), which itself is an extension of established curiosity theory (Loewenstein, (1994). Palacios & Brodzinsky (2010) have called for the development of process models in adoption; the ACP responds to this call by allowing interpretation of a temporal order of events that lead to information seeking, of which the formation of an adoption-related information gap is the first step. In addition, for the first time specific content of adoption-related curiosity at emerging adulthood is identified. The study also examined the ACP and areas of curiosity for birth mothers and birth fathers separately. Finally, we address emerging adulthood which is an underrepresented developmental period in the adoption literature.

An important limitation of the study was the focus on predominately white individuals adopted as infants in the United States, which does not allow for generalization to other populations of adoptees, such as those adopted transracially or internationally. In particular, the content of curiosity may vary by the type of adoption. Future research should focus on the similarities and differences in curiosity content across international, transracial, older child adoption, adoption from foster care, and other adoption forms. Further exploration is also needed to establish more clearly ways in which gender may contribute to the information seeking process and interest in specific adoption-related information. Nevertheless, the articulation of the process model is a clear contribution to this line of research.

Conclusion

The current study provides important description of the process for identifying curiosity in emerging adults. Results of this study identify the influence of satisfaction with openness arrangement across time, from adolescence to emerging adulthood, on the development of an adoption-related information gap and emphasize that not all adopted persons express this type of curiosity. Development of adoption-related information gap, as delineated by the ACP, is an important aspect in the experience of many adopted persons. Individual differences in adoption-related curiosity, including that known information for some is adequate, has long been recognized in the adoption field. The development of the ACP has provided a tool for studying and understanding those differences.

Acknowledgments

The authors gratefully acknowledge the adoptive family members who generously shared their experiences as part of the Minnesota-Texas Adoption Research Project. Funding was provided by National Institute of Child Health and Human Development grant R01-HD-049859, National Science Foundation grant BCS-0443590, and William T. Grant Foundation grant 7146.

References

- Aquilino WS (2006). Family relationship and support systems in emerging adulthood. In Arnett J & Tanner J (Eds.), *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st Century* (pp. 193–217). Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Arnett JJ (2004). *Emerging adulthood: The winding road from the late teens through the twenties*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Arnett JJ (2006). Emerging adulthood: Understanding the new way of coming of age. In Arnett J & Tanner J (Eds.), *Emerging adults in America: Coming of age in the 21st Century* (pp. 3–19). Washington D.C.: American Psychological Association.
- Benson PL, Sharma AR, & Roehlkepartain EC (1994). *Growing Up Adopted: A portrait of adolescents and their families*. Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute.
- Brodzinsky DM (2011). Children's understanding of adoption: Developmental and clinical implications. *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 42(2), 200–207. doi:10.1037/a0022415
- Cohen J (1968). Weighted kappa: Nominal scale agreement with provision for scale disagreement or partial credit. *Psychological Bulletin*, 70, 213–220. doi:10.1037/h0026256 [PubMed: 19673146]
- Farr R, Grant-Marsney H, Musante D, Grotevant HD, & Wrobel G (2014). Adoptees' contact with birth relatives in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 29, 45–66. doi: 10.1177/0743558413487588
- Grant-Marsney H, Grotevant HD, & Sayer A (2015). Links between adolescents' closeness to adoptive parents and attachment style in young adulthood. *Family Relations*, 64, 221–232. doi:10.1111/fare.12113 [PubMed: 25859067]
- Grotevant HD, & McRoy RG (1998). *Openness in adoption: Exploring family connections*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Grotevant HD, McRoy RG, Wrobel GM, & Ayers-Lopez S (2013). Contact between adoptive and birth families: Perspectives from the Minnesota Texas Adoption Research Project. *Child Development Perspectives*, 7, 193–198. doi:10.1111/cdep.12039 [PubMed: 23956791]
- Grotevant HD, Perry Y, & McRoy R (2005). Openness in adoption: Outcomes for adolescents within their adoptive kinship networks. In Brodzinsky D & Palacios J (Eds.), *Psychological issues in adoption: Research and practice* (pp. 167–186). Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Grotevant HD, & Von Korff L (2011). Adoptive identity. In Schwartz S, Luyckx K, & Vignoles VL (Eds.), *Handbook of Identity Theory and Research* (pp. 585–601). New York: Springer
- Grotevant HD, Wrobel GM, Von Korff L, Skinner B, Newell J, Friese S, & McRoy R (2007). Many faces of openness in adoption: Perspectives of adopted adolescents and their parents. *Adoption Quarterly*, 10 (3–4), 79–101. doi: 10.1080/10926750802163204
- Howe D, & Feast J (2001). The long-term outcome of reunions between adult adopted people and their birth mothers. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31, 351–368. doi:10.1093/bjsw/31.3.351
- Irhammer M & Cederblad M (2000). Outcome of intercountry adoption in Sweden. In Selman P (Ed.). *Intercountry adoption: Development, trends and perspectives* (pp. 143–163). London: BAAF
- Loewenstein G (1994). The psychology of curiosity: A review and reinterpretation. *Psychological Bulletin*, 116(1), 75–98. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.116.1.75
- Mendenhall T, Berge J, Wrobel G, Grotevant H, & McRoy R. (2004). Adolescents' satisfaction with contacts in adoption. *Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 21(2), 176–190. doi:10.1023/b:casw.0000022730.89093.b7

- Müller U, Gibbs P, & Ariely S (2002). Predictors of psychological functioning and adoption experience in adults searching for their birthparents. *Adoption Quarterly*, 5(3), 25–53. doi:10.1300/J145v05n03_03
- Müller U & Perry B (2001). Adopted persons' search for and contact with their birth parents I: Who searches and why? *Adoption Quarterly*, 4(3), 5–37. doi:10.1300/J145v04n03_03
- Musante D (2010). Family predictors of negative instability in adopted emerging adults Unpublished Master's thesis, University of Massachusetts Amherst.
- Palacios J, & Brodzinsky DM (2010). Adoption research: Trends, topics, outcomes. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 34(3), 270–284. doi:10.1177/0165025410362837
- Reio TJ, Petrosko JM, Wiswell AK, & Thongsukmag J (2006). The measurement and conceptualization of curiosity. *The Journal of Genetic Psychology*, 167, 117–135. doi:10.3200/GNTP.167.2.117-135 [PubMed: 16910206]
- Siegel D (2012). Growing up in open adoption: Young adults' perspectives. *Families in Society: The journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 93(2), 133–140. doi:10.1606/1044-3894.4198
- Skinner-Drawz BA, Wrobel GM, Grotevant HD, & Von Korff L (2011). The role of adoption communicative openness in information seeking among adoptees from adolescence to emerging adulthood. *Journal of Family Communication*, 11, 181–197. doi:10.1080/15267431003656587 [PubMed: 23926444]
- Sobol MP, & Cardiff J (1983). A sociopsychological investigation of adult adoptees' search for birth parents. *Family Relations*, 32, 477–483. doi:10.2307/583686
- Tieman W, van der Ende J, & Verhulst FC (2008). Young adult international adoptees' search for birth parents. *Journal of Family Psychology*, 22, 67–687. doi:10.1037/a0013172
- Wrobel GM, Ayers-Lopez S, Grotevant HD, McRoy R, & Friedrich M (1996). Openness in adoption and the level of child participation. *Child Development*, 67, 2358–2374. doi: 10.1111/1467-8624.ep9706060172 [PubMed: 9022246]
- Wrobel GM & Dillon K (2009). Adopted adolescents: Who and what are they curious about? In Wrobel GM and Neil E (Eds.) *International advances in adoption research for practice* (pp. 217–244). London: Wiley.
- Wrobel GM, Grotevant HG, & McRoy RG (2004). Adolescent search for birth parents: Who moves forward? *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 19, 132–151. doi:10.1177/0743558403258125
- Wrobel GM, Grotevant HG, Samek DR & Von Korff L (2013) Adoptees' curiosity and information-seeking about birth parents in emerging adulthood: Context, motivation, and behavior. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 37 (5), 441–450. doi: 10.1177/0165025413486420

Table 1

Mean values for thinking about birth parent, satisfaction with openness arrangement and age as a function of an adoption information gap

	Information Gap			No Information Gap			<i>t</i>
	M	SD	N	M	SD	N	
<u>Birth Mother</u>							
Thinking about birth mother Wave 3	3.25	1.69	104	3.80	1.95	49	151 t = 1.78
Satisfaction Wave 2	2.00	1.02	89	2.77	.95	43	89.13 t = 4.25 ^{b*}
Satisfaction Wave 3	2.23	1.21	111	3.22	1.12	55	164 t = 5.07 ^b
Age	25.02	1.84	111	24.80	2.01	56	165 t = -.71
<u>Birth Father</u>							
Thinking about birth father Wave 3	2.59	1.51	112	2.05	1.48	41	151 t = -1.97 ^a
Satisfaction Wave 2	1.67	.93	91	2.13	1.04	32	121 t = 2.30 ^a
Satisfaction Wave 3	2.29	1.18	117	3.06	.99	47	101.0 t = 4.28 ^{b*}
Age	24.99	1.91	120	24.82	1.87	47	165 t = -.51

a
p < .05

b
p < .0001

* Levene's test for equality of variances was significant. T-test based on unequal variance.

Table 2

Intercorrelations for Study Variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Satisfaction with Birth Mother Openness Arrangement Wave 2	--									
2. Satisfaction with Birth Father Openness Arrangement Wave 2	.52***	--								
3. Thinking about Birth Mother Wave 3	.00	-.20*	--							
4. Thinking about Birth Father Wave 3	-.16	-.14	.59***	--						
5. Satisfaction with Birth Mother Openness Arrangement Wave 3	.16	.10	-.10	-.25**	--					
6. Satisfaction with Birth Father Openness Arrangement Wave 3	.08	.07	-.25**	-.32***	.52***	--				
7. Information Gap Birth Mother ^b	-.34***	-.08	-.14	.03	-.37***	-.20**	--			
8. Information Gap Birth Father ^b	-.20*	-.21*	-.06	.16*	-.33***	.30***	.60***	--		
9. Age	-.05	.12	-.80	-.31	.03	-.02	.06	.04	--	
10. Gender ^a	-.13	-.05	.20*	.16*	-.20*	-.20**	.08	.15*	.02	--
Mean	2.25	1.79	3.43	2.46	2.56	2.51	.66	.72	24.95	.49
SD	1.07	.98	1.78	1.51	1.26	1.18	.47	.45	1.88	.50

^aMale = 0; Female = 1.^bNo Gap = 0; Gap = 1.* $p < .05$, two-tailed.** $p < .01$, two-tailed.*** $p < .001$ two-tailed

Logistic regression analysis predicting an information gap for birth mothers and birth fathers

Table 3

Predicting Birth Mother Information Gap at W3									
N=123									
Step 1									
	B	SE	Odds Ratio	Wald	B	SE	Odds Ratio	Wald	Step 3
Age	.05	.10	1.05	.19	.03	.11	1.03	.09	.05
Gender	-.17	.42	.85	.16	.00	.44	1.00	.00	-.33
W2 Satisfaction	-.83	.23	.44	13.34 ^c	-.82	.23	.44	13.14 ^c	-.82
W3 Thinking about Birth Mother					-.21	.13	.81	2.73	-.23
W3 Satis									-.75
									.47
									12.69 ^c
Predicting Birth Father Information Gap at W3									
N=114									
Step 1									
	B	SE	Odds Ratio	Wald	B	SE	Odds Ratio	Wald	Step 3
Age	.04	.11	1.04	.10	.04	.11	1.04	.13	.05
Gender	.38	.45	1.46	.73	.33	.45	1.39	.52	.14
W2 Satisfaction	-.45	.23	.64	3.88 ^a	-.44	.23	.65	3.69 Sig .055	-.49
W3 Thinking about Birth Father					.10	.17	1.10	.32	-.02
W3 Satisfaction									-.88
									.42
									10.87 ^b

^a p < .05

^b p < .001

^c p < .0001

Emerging adult topics of curiosity regarding birth mother across gender and openness arrangement

Table 4

Top Ranked Items of Curiosity	Total Endorsement N = 111		Endorsement by Gender		Endorsement by Openness Arrangement ¹				χ^2 (df=3)
	n	%	Male	Female	χ^2 (df=1)	1	2	3	4
1 Medical Info/ Health History	57		22	35	4.74 ^a	31	17	5	4
		%	38.6	61.4		54.4	29.8	8.8	7.0
2 How they are doing	35		18	17	0.16	14	10	3	8
		%	51.4	48.6		40.0	28.6	8.6	22.9
3 Appearance/Physical Characteristics	31		9	22	6.63 ^a	20	8	1	2
		%	29.0	71.0		64.5	25.8	3.2	6.5
4 Other Children Parenting	29		8	21	6.97 ^b	16	8	2	3
		%	27.6	72.4		55.2	27.6	6.9	10.3
5 Personality/ Behaviors	28		12	16	0.50	12	9	3	4
		%	42.9	57.1		42.9	32.1	10.7	14.3
6 Identifying Information	24		9	15	1.52	18	3	1	2
		%	37.5	62.5		75.0	12.5	4.2	8.3
7 Reasons for placing child	23		11	12	0.01	11	9	1	2
		%	47.8	52.2		47.8	39.1	4.3	8.7
8 Culture/Nationality/Genealogy	23		15	8	3.19	10	6	0	7
		%	65.2	34.8		43.5	26.1	0	30.4
9 Location	22		8	14	1.66	13	6	1	2
		%	36.4	63.6		59.1	27.3	4.5	9.1
10 Interested in Adopted Child ²	16		3	13	6.69 ^a	9	5	0	2
		%	18.8	81.3		56.3	31.3	0	13.0

¹ 1= no contact, 2=stopped contact, 3=contact without meetings, 4= contact with meetings

² Did not meet the threshold of 15% but was significant for both males and females.

^a p < .05

^b p < .01

^c p < .001

$1000' > d_p$

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Author Manuscript

Emerging adult topics of curiosity regarding birth father across gender and openness arrangement

Table 5

Top Ranked Items of Curiosity		Total N= 120	Endorsement by Gender		Endorsement by Openness Arrangement ¹					
			Male	Female	χ^2 (df=1)	1	2	3	4	χ^2 (df=3)
1	Medical Info/ Health History	n 69 % 57.5	28 40.6	41 59.4	2.42	61	5	2	0	8.97 ^{a,2}
2	How they are doing	n 41 % 34.2	21 51.2	20 48.8	.52	32	6	1	2	1.65
3	Appearance/ Physical Characteristics	n 33 % 27.5	13 39.4	20 60.6	.97	28	2	1	2	1.16
4	Other Children Parenting	n 27 % 22.5	7 25.9	20 74.1	6.02 ^a	22	2	1	2	1.12
5	Culture/ Nationality/ Genealogy	n 27 % 22.5	16 59.3	11 40.7	2.22	23	2	1	1	.32
6	Personality/Behaviors	n 25 % 20.8	15 60.0	10 40.0	2.26	21	2	1	1	.19
7	Location	n 19 % 15.8	5 26.3	14 73.7	3.76	16	2	0	1	.83
8	Reasons for placing child	n 19 % 15.8	9 47.5	10 52.6	0.004	15	1	2	0	5.11 ²
9	Identifying Information	n 19 % 15.8	7 36.8	12 63.2	.88	18	0	0	1	3.52
14 ³	Circumstance of conception	n 7 % 5.8	6 85.7	1 14.3	4.55 ^a	6	0	1	0	3.71

¹ 1= no contact, 2=stopped contact, 3=contact without meetings, 4= contact with meetings

² One birth father is deceased. Percentages for openness arrangement based on one less than total endorsement.

³ Did not meet the threshold of 15% but was significant for males and females.

^a p < .05