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The Australian NHMRC Twin Registry: a resource for paediatric research

EDITOR.—The Australian NHMRC Twin Registry contains over 4000 pairs of twins under 10 years old, and a further 3000 up to the age of 18 years. The parents of these twins have volunteered to consider requests from researchers for studies in bona fide projects approved by the registry. This represents a major resource for studies in paediatric and adolescent epidemiology.

There are numerous and ingenious ways in which twins can be used to address scientific and medical questions. Some examples include examining genetic and environmental causes of variation, co-twin control studies based on disease discordant or exposure discordant pairs, longitudinal studies, and studies of gene-environment interaction.1 Although there have been over 70 projects conducted over the last 12 years on the 17 000 adult pairs on the registry, to date there have been few studies making use of the younger pairs. Baseline information has been computerised on about 50% of these pairs.

I would like to bring this to the attention of international paediatric researchers. Applications to utilise the registry can be made from researchers throughout the world. There may be some charge, depending on costs and the level of work required by local staff. All applications are reviewed by the executive committee of the registry, and advice on study design and practicalities is available. For more information, please write to me at the address below.

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