

# Community Youth Study

New York University | Nathan Kline Institute

## Staff Spotlight

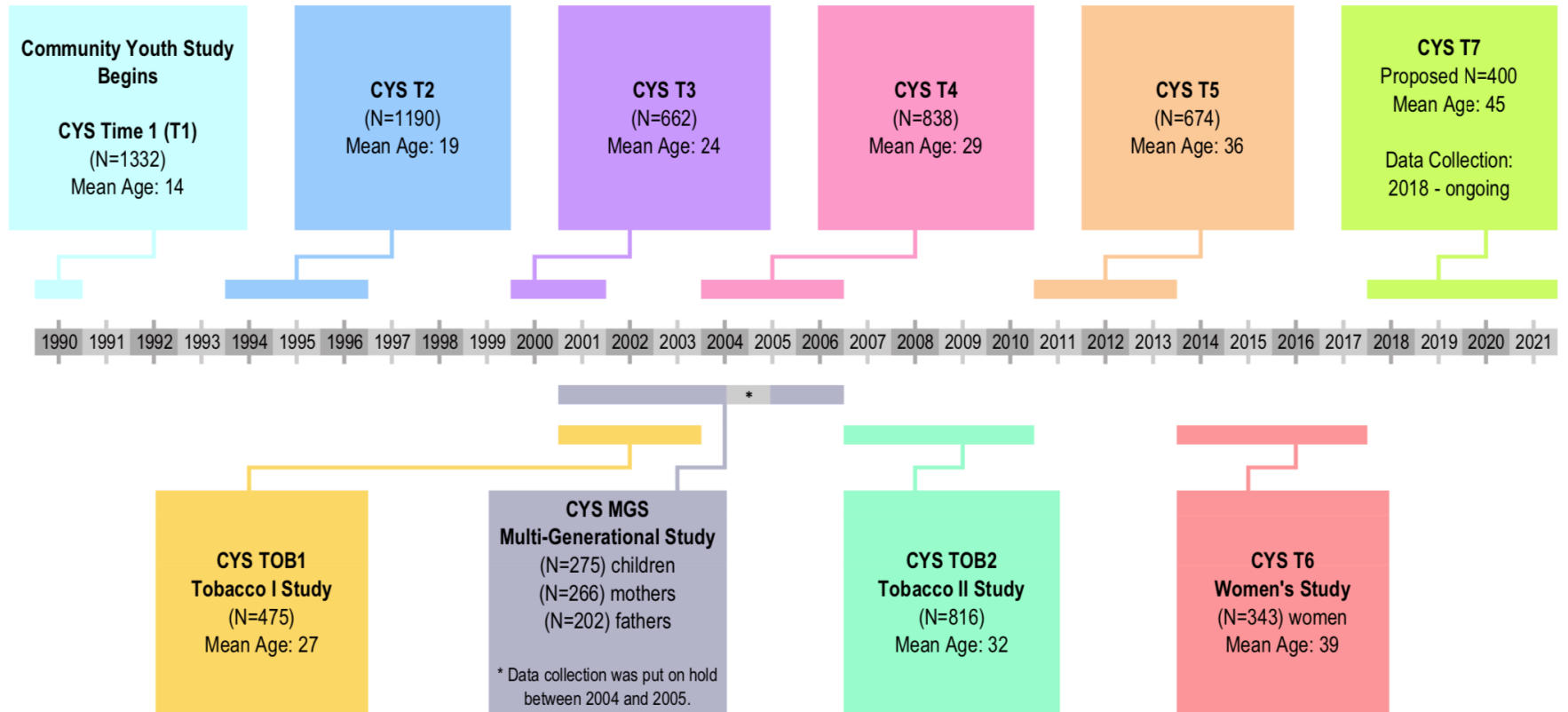
Kerstin Pahl | Principal Investigator

Kerstin “Tina” Pahl grew up in Berlin, Germany. As a developmental psychologist and someone who immigrated to the United States in young adulthood, she is very interested in how social contexts and life experiences shape life-course trajectories. Kerstin graduated from NYU with a degree in Developmental Psychology in 2005 and has worked on the Community Youth Study ever since. She is interested in how structural and cultural factors affect people’s identities, psychological well-being, and health. Kerstin’s current research focuses on the consequences of racial discrimination and on personal and social resources that can help people cope with stress and discrimination.

Outside of her research work, Kerstin is also a licensed psychoanalyst. She volunteers for a non-profit organization that delivers art-based literacy interventions to kids. Kerstin likes reading, biking, traveling, and spending time with her family. She lives with her beekeeper husband, their 12-year-old son, two rescue dogs, and four parakeets.



# COMMUNITY YOUTH STUDY



The Community Youth Study started in 1990 when our research group was based at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine in the East Harlem community. We were interested in including the life experiences of adolescents from our ethnically and racially diverse local community into our research program on adolescent development. At the time, ethnic and racial minority groups had been given very little attention in the national body of research on adolescent development. Thirty years later, we've completed nine waves of study and are currently enrolling for our tenth wave. Of these ten waves, seven have been open to the whole cohort who has participated over the years, while three waves of study were more specialized and had different eligibility criteria.

Our most recent wave of study that was open to all participants was Time 5 (T5), with data collection spanning from 2011 to 2013. This study used a mail-in questionnaire, and 674 of you participated. The questionnaire included basic demographic information, as well as questions on self-image, feelings, life satisfaction, ethnic/racial identity, physical health, substance use, neighborhood and work environments, financial concerns, and social support. We have provided a snapshot of the data we collected during this wave below.

**The average age of your cohort was 36 years old.**

**The median household income of the cohort was \$40,888, while the average household income in NYC was \$52,259 and \$58,003 for New York State.**

**While 32% reported never smoking, 33% reported smoking regularly.**

**While 13% completed less than a high school education, 30% were high school graduates or had received GEDs, 32% completed some college or received an Associate's Degree, 14% were college graduates, and 11% went on to do postgraduate education.**

**Eighty percent were employed, while 16% were unemployed and 4% were employed but not currently working due to various reasons (e.g., medical leave).**

**More than half (55%) of you reported being single, while 36% were married. However, 63% reported that it was very true or usually true that they could rely on friends and family for emotional support.**

Sources:

1. U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder. Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2013 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars): 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: New York City.
2. U.S. Census Bureau, American Fact Finder. Income in the Past 12 Months (in 2013 Inflation-Adjusted Dollars): 2009-2013 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates: New York State.

Sixty percent reported worrying about money-related issues often or all of the time, while 38% reported worrying about these issues only sometimes.

Nineteen percent reported it being sort of true or very true that there were plenty of safe places to walk or play outdoors in their neighborhood.

Eighty-three percent saw a doctor at least once during the past 5 years for a routine physical check up.

Seventy nine percent reported having some form of health insurance.

Sixty-four percent reported having excellent or good general health, 30% reported having only fair general health, and 6% reported having poor or very poor general health.

Thirty-one percent of you reported having experienced or witnessed an extremely stressful or traumatic event.

In 2014, the average life expectancy in the United States was **78.8** years.

Between 2013 and 2014, life expectancy increased for non-Hispanic black males, Hispanic males, and Hispanic females.

However, in 2014, the life expectancy of those of non-Hispanic black race was still lower than all other ethnic/racial groups.

Did you know that African Americans and Latinos are more likely than European Americans to have high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and diabetes?

Did you know that chronic exposure to stress is associated with accelerated aging, development of chronic diseases, decreased cognitive and physical functioning, and early mortality?

Want to help us examine how racial and ethnic identity, discrimination, and financial distress are related to chronic stress? Please read about our current study on the next page.

Sources:

1. Arias E. Changes in life expectancy by race and Hispanic origin in the United States, 2013-2014. NCHS data brief, no 244. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. 2016.
2. Beckles, GL, Chou, CF, & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). Diabetes - United States, 2006 and 2010. MMWR, 62(suppl. 3), 99-104.
3. Cozier, YC, Yu, J, Coogan, PF, Bethea, TN, Rosenberg, L, & Palmer, JR. (2014). Racism, segregation, and risk of obesity in Black Women's Health Study. American Journal of Epidemiology, 179, 875-883.
4. Gillespie, CD, Wigington, C, Hong, Y, & Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2013). Coronary heart disease and stroke deaths - United States, 2009. MMWR, 62(suppl. 3), 157-160.
5. National Center for Health Statistics. (2016). Health, United States, 2015: With special feature on racial and ethnic health disparities. Hyattsville, MD. January 31, 2017: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus15.pdf>.
6. Geronimus, AT, Hicken, M, Keene, D, & Bound, J. (2006). "Weathering" and age patterns of allostatic load scores among Blacks and Whites in the United States. American Journal of Public Health, 96, 826-833.
7. Seeman, T, Epel, E., Gruenewald, T, Karlamanga, A, & McEwen, BS. (2010). Socio-economic differentials in peripheral biology: cumulative allostatic load. Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, 1186, 223-239.
8. Seeman, TE, Singer, BH, Rowe, JW, Horwitz, RI, & McEwen, BS. (1997). Price of adaptation - allostatic load and its health consequences. Archives of Internal Medicine, 157, 2259-2268.
9. Juster, RP, Bizik, G, Picard, M, Arseneault-Lapierre, G, Sindi, S, Trpanier, L,...Lupien, SJ. (2011). A transdisciplinary perspective of chronic stress in relation to psychopathology through the life span development. Development and Psychopathology, 23, 725-776.

## Participate in Our Current Study

“Longitudinal Effects of Socioeconomic Disadvantage and Racial Discrimination on Health Among African Americans and Puerto Ricans”


Our current wave of study, funded by the National Institute of Minority Health and Health Disparities, is examining how social conditions influence stress burden, well-being, and health over time, with particular interest in:

1. Stressful experiences, including discrimination and socioeconomic disadvantage
2. Individual characteristics and resources that may help you cope with these experiences

For this study, we are conducting surveys like we have done in the past. In addition, we are collecting measurements assessing cardiovascular and metabolic health and collecting a few biological specimens to assess biomarkers of your metabolic health, endocrine and immune system function, and stress reactivity. If you have not already participated, please contact us. We are recruiting for this study for the next few years and would be happy to tell you more about this study and discuss your participation. You would be compensated \$150 in cash the day of the visit, and we would also enter you into a prize drawing for a 1-in-50 chance of winning a \$500 gift card.

### CONTACT US

If you have any questions, would like to give us any feedback or suggestions of what you'd like to hear from us, or are interested in participating in our current study, please call, text, or email us.

 (917) 938-4647

 [CYS@Nkl.rfmh.org](mailto:CYS@Nkl.rfmh.org)

We've seen

# 117

participants  
so far for this  
current  
study.

We've had

# 2

winners of  
gift card  
drawings of  
\$500 each for  
the current  
study.

We plan to  
interview

# 283

more  
participants  
for our  
current  
study.