

# Contact With Grandparents Among Children Conceived Via Donor Insemination by Lesbian and Heterosexual Mothers

Megan Fulcher, Raymond W. Chan, Barbara Raboy,  
and Charlotte J. Patterson

## SYNOPSIS

**Objective.** This study compared the networks of extended family and friendship relationships of children conceived via donor insemination with lesbian versus heterosexual parents. **Design.** Eighty families participated; 55 of the families were headed by lesbian parents and 25 were headed by heterosexual parents. Parents reported their children's contact with grandparents and other important adults. **Results.** Most children had regular contact with grandparents, other relatives, and adult nonrelatives outside their immediate households, and there were no differences in this regard as a function of parental sexual orientation. Both children of lesbian and heterosexual parents had more frequent contact with the parents of their biological mother than with the parents of their father or other mother. **Conclusions.** Contrary to negative stereotypes, children of lesbian mothers were described as having regular contact with grandparents. Regardless of parental sexual orientation, children were described as being in more frequent contact with grandparents to whom they were biologically linked.

## INTRODUCTION

The grandparent-grandchild relationship is unique within the family. Unlike parents, grandparents are able to "volunteer" to contact the child (Troll, 1983). This is important because children come to understand that grandparents usually participate in their lives not because they have to, but because they love them and enjoy being together (Kornhaber & Woodward, 1981). Although both grandfathers and grandmothers report deep satisfaction in their role as grandparents (Block, 2000), grandmothers may have higher quality relationships with grandchildren (Hayslip, Shore, & Henderson, 2000). Having contact with grandchildren may often be a

source of pleasure to grandparents. Grandparents who enjoy their role often report that visiting grandchildren brings meaning and joy to their lives (Kivnick, 1982).

Grandparents can contribute to the healthy development of their grandchildren on many levels, both directly and indirectly (Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Spence, Black, Adams, & Crowther, 2001). Children benefit directly from contact with grandparents through play and emotional feedback as well as through stimulating learning experiences (Tinsley & Parke, 1984). Grandparents can also help grandchildren indirectly (Eggebeen, 1992; Eggebeen & Hogan, 1990; Hogan, Eggebeen, & Clogg, 1993; Rossi & Rossi, 1990; Zarit & Eggebeen, 1995). By sharing resources, such as time or money, grandparents may free parents' time and energy for positive interactions with the child. Grandparents may also offer advice and parenting models for new parents (Griff, 1999; Tinsley & Parke, 1984). Grandparents also offer parents emotional support in the face of parenting challenges (Baranowski & Schilmoeller, 1999; Heller, Hsieh, & Rowitz, 2000).

Contact is influenced by the age and health of the grandparent and grandchild as well as by their geographic proximity to one another (Cherlin & Furstenberg, 1986; Creasey & Kaliher, 1995; Silverstein & Marengo, 2001; Watson, 1997). Contact is also a function of the parent's gender. Children in heterosexual two-parent families are more likely to be in regular contact with their maternal grandparents than with their paternal grandparents (Chan & Elder, 2000; Euler, Hoier, & Rohde, 2001; Matthews & Sprey, 1985). There are many means for grandparents and grandchildren to contact one another. Recent research suggests that grandparents may be using technology (e.g., e-mail) increasingly in place of face-to-face contact and letter writing to keep in touch with grandchildren (Harwood, 2000).

Contact with each other strengthens the quality of the grandparent-grandchild relationship (Muransky, 2001; Peterson, 1999). One of the most important influences on children's contact with grandparents is their parent's relationship with the grandparents; children whose parents have positive relationships with their own parents have more contact with grandparents (Muransky, 2001; Uhlenberg & Hammill, 1998). Parents function as a "lineal bridge" (Hill, Foote, Aldous, Carlson, & MacDonald, 1970) between grandparents and grandchildren. A parent's relationship with his or her own parents affects a child's relationship with that grandparent (Brubaker, 1990). When the connection between the custodial parent and grandparents is weakened (e.g., divorced mother and her children's paternal grandparents), the grandparent-grandchild relationship may be deeply harmed (Kruk & Hall, 1996).

In addition to their contacts with grandparents, children can have social networks that include many different adults both within and outside the family. Elementary school-aged children have social networks that include almost as many adults as peers (Feiring & Lewis, 1989). Children are likely to have more female adults in their social network, but male adults are more likely to be a social support to boys than to girls (Feiring & Lewis, 1988). School-aged children are likely to have more nonkin adults in their support network than relatives (Feiring & Lewis, 1988). Members of children's social networks serve as resources for children by providing attention and positive feedback, and serving as role models for children. Indeed, the more time children spend with related adults, the more favorable their school performance is likely to be (Cochran & Riley, 1988).

Until recently, very little information has been available about the family lives of lesbian mothers and their children (Allen & Demo, 1995; D'Augelli & Patterson, 1995; Laird & Green, 1996; Patterson, 1998). In the absence of research, it has sometimes been assumed that lesbians are estranged from their families of origin. For instance, informal reports suggest that grandparents may be less likely to remain in contact with children being reared by lesbian daughters as compared to those being reared by heterosexual daughters (Patterson, 1996; Saffron, 1996). The fear is that the "lineal bridge" between grandparents and grandchildren may be weakened or broken by strained relationships between lesbian mothers and their parents. This assumption leads to concern that children of lesbian mothers will have less contact with relatives and hence be deprived of the benefits of contact with grandparents. In custody disputes, judges may be more likely to award child custody to lesbian parents who can provide evidence that they are in contact with extended family members (Connolly, 1996). Anecdotal reports suggest that such stereotypes are incorrect (Laird, 1993; Lewin, 1993; Weston, 1991), but empirical research has been limited. Systematic research on contacts that children of lesbian mothers have with their grandparents and other adults outside their immediate household would be valuable in clarifying the place that family connections may have in the lives of these children.

Other concerns about children growing up with lesbian parents center on development of gender roles. In legal settings (e.g., in the context of custody proceedings) in particular, concerns have been voiced about an assumed lack of male role models among children of lesbian mothers (Patterson & Redding, 1996). Legislators have suggested that because children will likely become heterosexual adults, they need to be reared in a context that exposes them to both men and women as role models

(Baldauf, 1997). Thus, studies of children's social networks need to examine the extent to which adult men are among the social contacts of children with lesbian versus heterosexual parents.

In one of the first studies of such issues, the Bay Area Families Study (Patterson, Hurt, & Mason, 1998) examined 37 families headed by lesbians and studied grandparents' and other adults' contact with children. Patterson and her colleagues reported that most children of lesbian mothers in their sample were in regular contact with grandparents, relatives, and other adults outside their immediate households. Grandparents who were biologically related to the children (i.e., parents of biological mother) were more likely to have more frequent contact with grandchildren than were grandparents who did not share a biological link (i.e., parents of nonbiological mother). Consistent with expectations based on earlier research, children who had more contact with grandparents also showed fewer internalizing behavior problems than did other children (Patterson et al., 1998).

Although these results were intriguing, a number of limitations hindered a clear-cut interpretation of them. Data for the Bay Area Families Study were based on a small sample of families who lived in a single geographical area. The study did not include a comparison group of heterosexual families, so although these children were described by their parents as having regular contact with grandparents, the study did not reveal how their contact with grandparents differed compared to that enjoyed by children with heterosexual parents. It would be helpful, then, to compare results from other lesbian families, and also to examine comparable data from heterosexual families.

To examine the contacts of children of lesbian and heterosexual parents with grandparents and other adults, we drew on data from the Contemporary Families Study (Chan, Brooks, Raboy, & Patterson, 1998; Chan, Raboy, & Patterson, 1998). The Contemporary Families Study involved a sample of lesbian and heterosexual couples who had conceived children via donor insemination using the resources of a single sperm bank. This allowed us to examine social networks in families headed by lesbian as well as heterosexual couples, such that one parent in each family type was biologically related to the child while the other was not. We were able to examine the effects of biological relatedness in this sample by comparing children's contacts with the biological mother's parents to those with the nonbiological parent's parents. We also examined the possible association of parents' sexual orientation and levels of contact with grandparents and studied connections between such contacts and children's behavior.

## METHOD

### Participants

Families participating in this study were drawn from among the former clients of The Sperm Bank of California (TSBC), which provides reproductive services to clients regardless of sexual orientation or relationship status. Clients who had conceived and given birth prior to July 1990 were considered eligible to participate in the study. Six families who had participated in The Bay Area Families Study were excluded to maintain independence of data between the two studies. Also excluded was one family headed by a woman who identified herself as bisexual. Efforts were made to contact all eligible families. One hundred and eight (55.4%) of the 195 families that had been deemed eligible on the basis of sperm bank records were successfully contacted. Eighty of the families that were contacted (74.1%) agreed to participate in the study. Mothers were classified as lesbian versus heterosexual and coupled versus single based on their self-reported identities at the time of the child's birth.<sup>1</sup> Families headed by couples and by lesbian mothers were more likely to participate than those headed by single mothers,  $\chi^2(1, N = 108) = 6.18, p < .01$ , or heterosexual parents,  $\chi^2(1, N = 108) = 4.33, p < .05$ . No other significant differences between participating and nonparticipating families emerged.

The final sample consisted of 80 families: 49 were headed by lesbian couples, 6 by lesbian single mothers, 17 by heterosexual couples, and 8 by heterosexual single mothers. Children averaged 7 years of age and biological mothers averaged 42 years of age. Parents were generally well-educated, and most were employed at least part-time. They were relatively affluent, with family incomes well above national averages. Children of single parents were significantly older than children of couples. Single mothers were significantly older than coupled mothers were. Single mothers worked more hours per week than coupled mothers did. Lesbian biological mothers were more educated than heterosexual mothers,  $t(78) = 3.07, p < .01$ , and lesbian nonbiological mothers were more educated than nonbiological fathers,  $t(64) = 2.53, p < .05$ . There were no dif-

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<sup>1</sup>In other published reports of these data, participants were classified as coupled or single based on their status at the time of data collection. The standard here of classification by status at the time of the child's birth results in different numbers of single versus coupled participants across reports, but was deemed more appropriate for our purposes because the other method would have rendered data about contact with grandparents more difficult to interpret.

ferences in the numbers of living grandparents reported for children had across family types.

### Procedures

Parents reported the amount of contact that target children had with their grandparents. Biological grandparents were identified by the child's biological mother as her parents, and nonbiological grandparents were identified by the child's biological mother as the nonbiological parent's parents. Contact was defined as a visit, telephone call, card, or e-mail. Contact scores ranged from 1 to 7 with anchors of 1 (*no contact*), 2 (*less than once a year*), 3 (*once a year*), 4 (*5 to 10 times a year*), 5 (*once a month*), 6 (*once a week*), and 7 (*daily contact*). The mother also reported where each grandparent lived in proximity to the child. Geographic proximity scores ranged from 1 to 5, with anchors of 1 (*in the house*), 2 (*down the street*), 3 (*same state*), 4 (*out of state*), and 5 (*out of country*). If the mother did not list nonbiological grandparents, because she was single or not in contact with a former partner, the family's data were not included for these comparisons. Data for children whose grandparent had died were not considered in the comparisons for that grandparent. Parents also listed up to five adults, in addition to parents and grandparents who were seen as "important" in the child's life. The adult's gender and relationship to the child (e.g., parent's friend, relative, neighbor, childcare provider, and coach) were recorded as well. Each of these adults was also scored for contact using the scale described earlier.

A letter from the Executive Director of TSBC initially contacted each eligible family. The letter gave a brief explanation of the study and asked each family to consider participation. Telephone calls from TSBC staff members followed these letters to describe the study more fully and to request each family's participation. When a family agreed to participate, a structured telephone interview about family background and current family status was conducted. Information about contact with grandparents and other adults was collected during this interview.

## RESULTS

We present the results in two sections. The first section examines the amount of contact children were reported to have with grandparents and other adults as a function of parental sexual orientation and mothers' relationship status. The second section compares reported contact between children and their biological versus nonbiological grandparents.

### Children's Contact With Grandparents and Other Adults

*Grandparent contact.* The cell sizes considered in the following analysis were unexpectedly unequal among the four family types. Because some of the cell sizes were small, the statistical power to examine interaction effects between parental sexual orientation and mother's relationship status at birth was not available. For this reason, interactions were not evaluated in the analyses described later.

Most parents reported that their children were in regular contact with grandparents. There were no significant differences in the number of living grandparents according to parental sexual orientation or relationship status (Table 1).

Children's contacts with biological grandmothers were highly correlated with those with biological grandfathers,  $r(43) = .92, p < .01$ . Similarly, children's contacts with nonbiological grandmothers were highly correlated with those for nonbiological grandfathers,  $r(42) = .70, p < .01$ . For these reasons, we collapsed across gender of the grandparents and compared contact with biological and nonbiological grandparents. Frequency of grandparent contact was similar for children of lesbian mothers and for children of heterosexual parents. This was true for both biological grandparents,  $\chi^2(1, N = 117) < .1, ns$ , and for nonbiological grandparents,  $\chi^2(1, N = 104) = .08, ns$ .

*Contact with other adults.* Most parents reported that their children had a substantial social network of both related and unrelated adults. Girls had more relatives with whom they had monthly or more frequent contact in their social networks than boys,  $t(78) = -2.86, p < .01$ , and this was particularly true of female relatives,  $t(78) = -2.37, p < .05$ . Boys were more likely than girls to have unrelated men with whom they had monthly or more frequent contact in their social networks,  $t(78) = 2.07, p < .05$ . Children with single mothers had similar amounts of unrelated and related men and women in their social networks as children whose biological mothers were coupled.

The mean numbers of other adults that children of lesbian and heterosexual parents were described as having monthly or more frequent contact with are shown in Table 2. As seen in the table, the amount of contact with other adults did not differ significantly for children in the two family types. There was no significant difference in the number of related adults children had at least monthly contact with as a function of parental sexual orientation. There was also no significant difference in the number of adult men with whom children of lesbian parents and children of heterosexual parents had contact. As seen in Table 2, children of heterosexual parents

TABLE 1  
Demographic Characteristics as a Function of Family Type

Variable (SDS)	Parental Sexual Orientation			Relationship Status		
	Lesbian	Heterosexual	Lesbian Versus Heterosexual	Couple	Single	Couple Versus Single
Number of families	55	25		66	14	
Number of boys/girls	37/18	17/8		44/22	10/4	
Child's age in years	7.51 (1.72)	7.77 (1.74)	$t(78) < 1, ns$	7.36 (1.60)	8.65 (1.92)	$t(78) = -2.64, p < .01$
Biological mother's age in years	41.28 (4.18)	40.75 (4.59)	$t(76) < 1, ns$	40.59 (4.35)	43.50 (3.13)	$t(76) = -2.37, p < .02$
Education <sup>a</sup>	4.02 (1.06)	3.20 (1.19)	$t(78) = 3.07, p < .01$	3.77 (1.16)	3.71 (1.20)	$t(78) < 1, ns$
Work hours	34.95 (13.88)	35.52 (13.47)	$t(78) < 1, ns$	33.53 (13.90)	42.64 (9.79)	$t(78) = -2.33, p < .02$
Annual income (in thousands)	46.33 (27.59)	31.73 (16.65)	$t(63.01) = 2.83, p < .01$	40.81 (24.88)	48.38 (29.59)	$t(74) < 1, ns$
Nonbiological parent's age in years	42.49 (5.27)	40.53 (4.19)	$t(50) = 1.34, ns$	41.92 (4.91)		
Education <sup>a</sup>	3.82 (1.26)	3.05 (.71)	$t(64) = 2.53, p < .05$	3.62 (1.18)		
Work hours	37.67 (9.89)	40.16 (12.45)	$t(63) < 1, ns$	37.93 (10.57)		
Annual income (in thousands)	51.39 (26.48)	43.25 (18.58)	$t(52) = 1.11, ns$	49.06 (24.30)		
Household income (in thousands)	82.50 (43.29)	63.18 (32.43)	$t(74) = 1.89, ns$	78.97 (40.25)	66.92 (45.88)	$t(74) < 1, ns$
Living Grandparents						
Biological	1.46 (.61)	1.48 (.65)	$t(77) < 1, ns$	1.48 (.62)	1.43 (.65)	$t(77) < 1, ns$
Nonbiological	1.49 (.66)	1.80 (.41)	$t(63) = -1.94, ns$	1.58 (.62)		
Total	2.93 (.77)	3.25 (.89)	$t(64) = -1.48, ns$	3.03 (.77)		

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

<sup>a</sup>Education: 1 = no degree, 2 = high school degree, 3 = college degree, 4 = some graduate work, 5 = graduate degree.

**TABLE 2**  
**Adults With Whom Children Have at Least Monthly Contact by Family Type**

Variable	Parental Sexual Orientation		Lesbian Versus Heterosexual		Relationship Status			Couple Versus Single
	Lesbian	Heterosexual	Heterosexual	Heterosexual	Couple	Single		
Total adults	2.31 (1.35)	2.24 (1.36)		$t(46.40) < 1, ns$	2.22 (1.37)	2.57 (1.28)	$t(19.78) < 1, ns$	
Total men	.78 (.93)	.96 (.84)		$t(51.21) = -1.11, ns$	.77 (.94)	.93 (.73)	$t(23.21) < 1, ns$	
Total women	1.55 (1.14)	1.28 (1.02)		$t(51.34) = 1.04, ns$	1.42 (1.08)	1.64 (1.22)	$t(17.64) < 1, ns$	
Total relatives	.78 (1.15)	1.28 (1.45)		$t(37.60) = -1.49, ns$	.97 (1.29)	.79 (1.25)	$t(19.31) < 1, ns$	
Male relatives	.36 (.78)	.56 (.71)		$t(50.55) = -1.11, ns$	.42 (.79)	.43 (.65)	$t(78) < 1, ns$	
Female relatives	.42 (.76)	.72 (1.14)		$t(34.17) = -1.21, ns$	.55 (.91)	.36 (.84)	$t(20.07) < 1, ns$	
Total non-kin	1.51 (1.18)	.96 (1.10)		$t(49.88) = 2.02, ns$	1.24 (1.16)	1.79 (1.19)	$t(18.68) = -1.56, ns$	
Male non-kin	.36 (.52)	.40 (.65)		$t(38.88) < 1, ns$	.35 (.57)	.50 (.52)	$t(20.19) < 1, ns$	
Female non-kin	1.15 (1.11)	.56 (.65)		$t(72.93) = 2.95, p < .01$	.89 (.99)	1.29 (1.14)	$t(17.45) = -1.19, ns$	

Note. Standard deviations are in parentheses.

were reported to have contact with somewhat more men and more relatives, but these differences did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Children of lesbian parents did, however, have significantly more contact with unrelated women than did children of heterosexual parents. Overall, the amount of contact with adults outside the home was similar among children of lesbian and heterosexual parents.

#### Children's Contact With Biological and Nonbiological Grandparents

Regardless of parental sexual orientation, more children were reported to be in regular contact with their biological as compared to their nonbiological grandparents. The percentages of children who had at least monthly contact with biological and nonbiological grandparents are shown in Figure 1. We considered in these analysis only data for those children whose grandparents were still living. More than three fourths of the children of lesbian parents had at least monthly contact with their biological mother's parents, whereas slightly fewer than half were in monthly or more frequent contact with their nonbiological mother's parents. This difference was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1, 148) = 13.41, p < .01$ . Similarly, 76% of children of heterosexual parents had at least monthly contact with their mother's parents, whereas only 50% had monthly contact with their

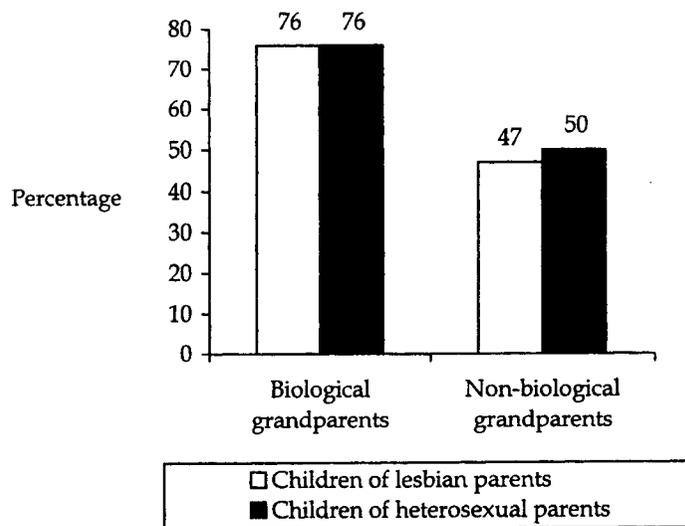


FIGURE 1

Percentage of children with monthly or more frequent contact with grandparents.

father's parents; this difference was also significant,  $\chi^2(1, 73) = 5.15, p < .05$ . Overall, as seen in Figure 1, children had more frequent contact with their biological grandparents than with their nonbiological grandparents.

Children's geographical proximity to grandparents did not explain the different amounts of contact they had with biological and nonbiological grandparents. Most grandparents lived in the same state as their grandchild. There was no difference between biological and nonbiological grandfathers in their geographic proximity to grandchildren,  $t(23) = 1.24, ns$ , nor was there any difference between biological and nonbiological grandmothers in their geographic proximity to grandchildren,  $t(41) < 1, ns$ . Thus, children's more frequent reported contacts with biological grandparents were not attributable to geographic proximity.

## DISCUSSION

Our results were not consistent with the view that children of lesbian parents are isolated from members of their extended families or from other adult role models. In fact, we found that children who were conceived via donor insemination by lesbian mothers were as likely as children who were conceived via donor insemination by heterosexual parents to be in contact with both biological and nonbiological grandparents were. Children in both groups of families were also described as having similar amounts of contact with related and nonrelated adults outside their immediate households. In addition, there were no significant differences in the numbers of male adults with whom children of lesbian and heterosexual parents had contact. Our data thus disconfirmed notions that children of lesbian parents are isolated from members of their extended families, or from male adults, or from other adult friends of the family. We found that the adult networks that were described as surrounding children of lesbian mothers were remarkably similar to those described as surrounding children of heterosexual parents.

Because our analysis revealed few differences as a function of family type, questions about statistical power must be considered. To determine statistical power, we calculated the probability of finding significant differences, should they exist in a sample of 80 families (Cohen, 1988). This analysis revealed that we would be able to detect medium or large effects. For smaller effects, however, our sample size does indeed inhibit the statistical power to find differences. Therefore, we cannot conclusively rule out any small effects that may exist. A small effect would be one that accounted for less than 10% of variance. Nevertheless our results do suggest that any influences of family context on grandparent are either small or nonexistent.

Although no differences in contacts with grandparents or other adults emerged as a function of parental sexual orientation, our data revealed a difference associated with biological relatedness. This difference was between the number of reported contacts with biological grandparents and nonbiological grandparents. Children of both lesbian and heterosexual parents were described as having more frequent contact with their biological mother's parents than with their nonbiological parent's parents. This finding was consistent with earlier data from the Bay Area Families Study (Patterson et al., 1998) for lesbian families, and also with data from earlier studies of heterosexual families (Hagestad, 1982; Matthews & Sprey, 1985; Rosenthal, 1985). It is important to remember that these grandchildren did not live in closer proximity to their biological grandparents than to their nonbiological grandparents. Perhaps because we defined contact as including telephone calls and letters as well as visits, geographic proximity of grandparents and grandchildren did not predict amount of contact in this sample.

Results for children of heterosexual parents were in line with our expectations. A number of investigators have reported that children have stronger and closer relationships with their maternal grandparents (Euler et al., 2001; Hagestad, 1982; Matthews & Sprey, 1985; Rosenthal, 1985). These links are strong because women typically have closer relationships with their parents and work harder to create a "lineal bridge" between their parents and their children than do men (Chan & Elder, 2000; Troll & Bengtson, 1979). Results for children in heterosexual families were consistent with these notions.

These notions do not, however, explain why children of lesbian mothers were in more active contact with the parents of their biological mother than with the parents of their nonbiological mother. Because both parents in these families are women, gender-based views fail to explain the observed variability. One possible explanation is that, in lesbian couples, the woman who maintains a stronger relationship with her own parents is more likely to become a biological parent. If so, her stronger relationship with her own parents would likely support greater contact between grandparents and grandchildren after the birth of a child.

Another possibility may be that this difference is a function of biological relatedness as such. Regardless of pre-existing relationships with their daughters, grandparents may be less likely to put forth effort to contact grandchildren who are not biologically related to them, and may be less likely to view such children as fully their "own" (Hetherington et al., 1999). For instance, in the grandparent literature on families headed by heterosexual couples, step-grandparents are in less contact and have lower quality relationships with step-grandchildren (Creasy, 1993; Henry, Ceglian, &

Matthews, 1992). However, recent research suggests that grandparents of adopted grandchildren (also biologically unrelated) are able to form close and lasting relationships (Soparkar, 1999). To evaluate this and other interpretations, it would be helpful to have longitudinal data to examine the nature of the daughters' relationships with their parents both before and after the birth of the child. Contacts of grandchildren and grandparents could be evaluated in light of their mothers' concurrent and pre-existing relationships. In this way, a clearer understanding of children's contacts with grandparents could be obtained.

Certain limitations of this study should be acknowledged. For instance, contacts between grandparents and grandchildren could be explored from many different perspectives, and in more detail. A child's frequent telephone conversations with grandparents may have very different influences from face-to-face caregiving activities, and these may vary as a function of a child's age. A larger number of comparison groups would help us to answer questions raised by differences in contact between children and their biological and nonbiological grandparents. Because most of the data were drawn from a single reporter, the biological mother, there may be an effect of social desirability. It would also be helpful to include reports of contact from grandparents themselves, or from children in addition to reports from parents. Most important, it would be helpful to have longitudinal data with which to examine this topic.

Overall, our results revealed few differences in the networks of adult friends and family members that were described as surrounding children of lesbian and heterosexual parents. In this way, the current findings failed to confirm prevalent stereotypes about isolation among children of lesbian mothers. Regardless of parental sexual orientation, however, biological relatedness of grandparents and grandchildren was an important predictor of their reported contact with one another. Children were described as having more frequent contact with the parents of their biological parent than with the parents of their nonbiological parent, raising significant questions about the role of biological relatedness in the construction of family relationships.

#### AFFILIATIONS AND ADDRESSES

Megan Fulcher, Department of Psychology, University of Virginia, 102 Gilmer Hall, P.O. Box 400400, Charlottesville, VA 22904. E-mail: mf7z@virginia.edu. Raymond W. Chan is now at NFO Migliara/Kaplan; Barbara Raboy is at The Sperm Bank of California; Charlotte J. Patterson is at the University of Virginia.

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