Purpose: Increased marriage relationship satisfaction not only has intrinsic value, but also is associated with a number of health benefits. Although numerous studies have explored the intergenerational transmission of relationship quality, most studies lack nationally-representative samples. This study will contribute to the literature on the intergenerational transmission of relationship satisfaction by using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health (Add Health; 1994-2008).

Participants: The original sample of 15,243 adolescents was derived from the Add Health study. Add Health, a longitudinal study with a stratified, nationally representative sample of students from high schools and feeder schools across the US who were in 7th through 12th grade in 1994 with some oversampling of populations of interest. The analytic sample consisted of 5,114 of the original adolescents whose responses were included in the public use Wave 4 (2008) Add Health dataset used for this study.

Methodology: Variables assessing parent relationship satisfaction and parenting style from in-home surveys of students and students’ parents in Wave 1 (1994-1995) and survey responses on gender and relationship satisfaction from participants who are adults in Wave 4 (2008) will be used in the analyses. The hypothesis that the intimate partner relationship quality of the parent is significantly related to the intimate partner relationship quality of the adult student 13 years later will be tested with hierarchical multiple linear regression analyses. Moderational analyses will be conducted to determine if parenting style and student gender moderate the longitudinal association between the youth’s parents’ relationship quality with the adult youth’s own intimate partner relationship qualities.

Implications for Practice: Findings on the intergenerational transmission of relationship satisfaction will contribute to better understanding whether interventions to improve parental romantic relationships and parenting style may provide benefits to future generations.

Citation: