



The TEDS-Environment Study team wanted to take this opportunity to wish you all a very successful 2014. Thank you for all your support, and here's to a great New Year!

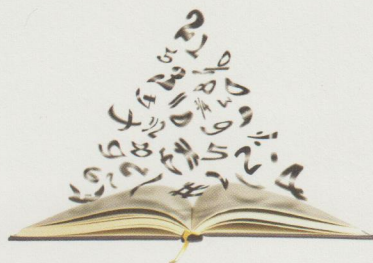
One year visiting you...

We are over half way through the data collection and it is going very well! A big thank you to those who have taken part already. It has been great fun catching up and hearing what you have been up to.

Those of you who we haven't seen yet will be hearing from us soon. If you have moved, please keep in touch (see back page for our details).

Some interesting facts and figures about the TEDS-Environment Study...

- There are **2,232** twins involved in the TEDS-Environment Study.
- This group is split between **1,092** boys and **1,140** girls.
- A total of **2,146** twins (96%) were seen when you were aged 12.



- **190** people have worked on our Study since it began in 1998. The team includes project leaders, research workers, data managers, administrators, placement students and laboratory technicians.
- We have twins living in **108** different postcode areas, as you can see from the map below. We also have twins living in **9** other countries, as far away as New Zealand.



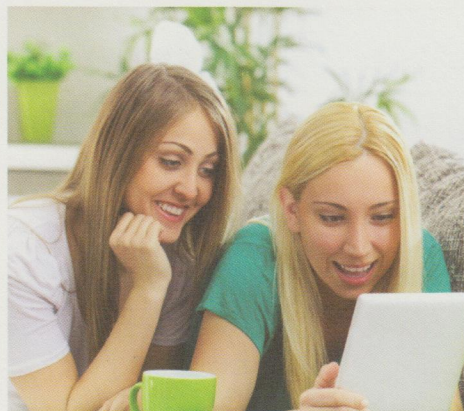
- We anticipate that the research workers will spend an impressive **24,909** hours travelling and visiting all of you.



Don't forget about a visit to London!

Remember that you have the opportunity to come to London for the day and visit King's College where we are based. For those of you who wish to visit the capital, come and take part in the Study at our place! All you have to do is let the TEDS-Environment research workers know when you are contacted and they will make all the arrangements for you.

If this is not for you, not a problem! The TEDS-Environment research workers can visit you at your place instead.



Big News!



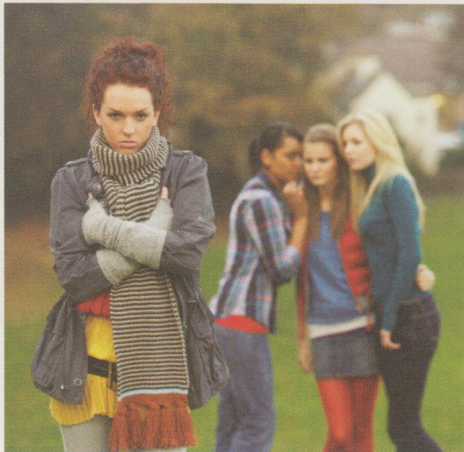
TEDS Environment now has its own Facebook page. Like us so we can keep in touch and hear about the great things you have been getting up to.

You can find our page at <https://www.facebook.com/tedsenvironment> or just search for "TEDS-Environment" on Facebook.

Overcoming bullying: Findings from TEDS-Environment

Some people may believe there is no escape from the damage brought about by being bullied. However, our research here at TEDS-Environment has suggested that there are ways to minimise these effects!

We all know it is a difficult experience to become a victim of bullies. Our research has shown that victims of bullying are more at risk of developing emotional and behavioural difficulties in the future because of this. But we noticed that some young people are able to overcome the stress of being bullied.



We set out to find out what it is about these individuals that makes them more capable of dealing with this unpleasant experience.

How can families reduce the effects from bullying?

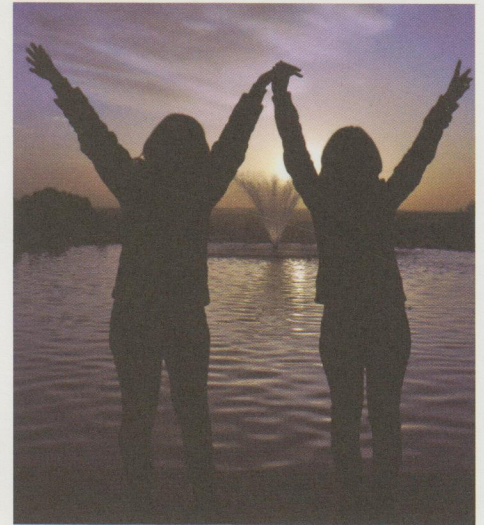
Our findings have shown that there are some factors in the family environment which build up strength and resilience in young people. Firstly, warm relationships with parents and siblings can reduce the risk of someone who has been bullied developing later problems.



Good relationships at home seem especially important for bullied individuals, as their families can provide the support and warmth that they don't receive from their peers.

For example, families can provide a calm and secure environment to reduce the stress and pressure that comes with being bullied.

Our findings show that young people who had been bullied but



grew up in supportive families had fewer emotional and behavioural problems over time than those from less supportive families.



ENOUGH ALREADY!

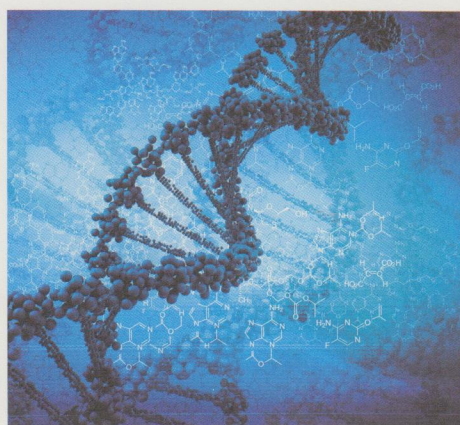
So, if you have been a victim of bullying, have a chat with your brother or sister, or catch up with your parents. It may be a good idea to share your experience with someone in the family who can understand what you're going through.

Rachel, Work Placement Student.

The blood samples you provide during a visit are a really important part of our research, and can contribute to great findings!

A similar study to TEDS-Environment which is based in New Zealand has been following its participants from birth up to the age of 38.

The researchers have been using DNA samples (similar to the ones



you provide) collected at ages 26 and 38 to look at telomeres.

Telomeres are the bits of DNA at the end of your chromosomes that protect the chromosomes from unraveling. This is similar to the plastic cap at the end of a shoelace. However, each time a cell divides (which is normal for most cells in the body), the telomeres get a little shorter.

Telomeres... V

Your view on TEDS-Environment!

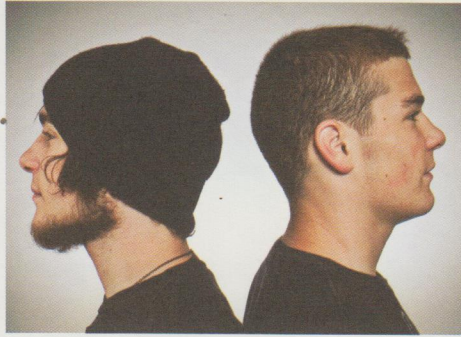
What does it mean to be a TEDS-Environment twin?

For as long as I can remember, my twin sister and I have been actively involved in TEDS-Environment. While at a young age it merely seemed like an infrequent home visit or a quick phone call (and the occasional 'Love2Shop' voucher), I am now aware of what TEDS-Environment aims to achieve in a broader sense, and the significance of being one of the many twins who have taken part in such research over the years.



TEDS-Environment is all about finding out how a combination of genes and the environment help shape our development from childhood into adulthood. For example, it aims to figure out what makes a set of twins growing up in the same household so different from each other (a situation relevant to my own).

It also investigates the relative effect of nature versus nurture in determining how we develop. With every interview and cheek swab sample, we've been contributing a little bit at a time to help uncover what TEDS-Environment researchers set out to understand.



So, why take part?

It's remarkable to think that as twins, we are exclusively unique in our 'helpfulness' when it comes to research into genetics. From a purely scientific point of view, no other single group of people could possibly match the usefulness of two siblings growing up simultaneously in the same environment and, in the case of identical twins, with the exact same genetic composition. It's this convenient combination of factors that enables scientists to draw conclusions about the influence of



genes and environment in all people. That's of course where TEDS-Environment comes in. And when you put it like that, the small amounts of time contributed by answering a few questions really does seem worth it.

Anusha, TEDS-Environment Twin.



"we are exclusively unique in our helpfulness when it comes to research"

What are they?

Eventually, the telomeres are so short that the cell can no longer divide and becomes inactive. Because of this, telomere length is a key player in determining how quickly we age, and in influencing our health as we grow older. We are also interested in studying this in TEDS-Environment twins!

The good news is that the blood samples we have collected from you



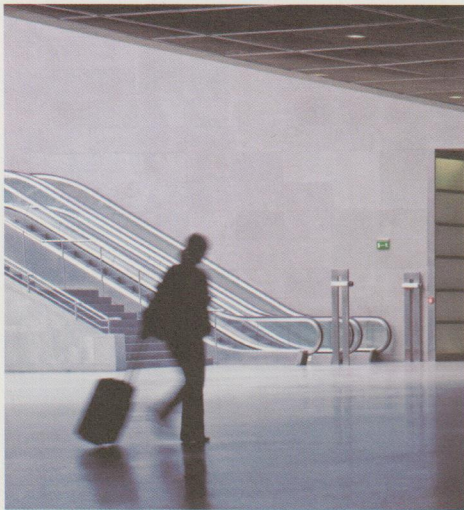
so far are of great quality, meaning we will be able to get really good data about how resistant young people are as they get older, as well as how telomeres interact with everyday experiences to influence your development.

You can find more information about telomeres at: goo.gl/mfrN9Y and in this video: goo.gl/LMrJW.

On the road with a TEDS-Environment research worker

What does it mean to be a TEDS-Environment research worker?

We're a year into phase 18 of the Study, and we're really enjoying visiting you all again. In the past year each of the TEDS-Environment research workers have spent around 1,000 hours travelling around the UK meeting twins, and we feel very lucky to have seen so many of you and so much of the country.



Meeting you is the main responsibility of the TEDS-Environment research workers and on average we see around four sets of twins a week. This means spending a lot of time on trains! We've travelled through rain, wind, snow and sunshine to get to you, and have had some funny experiences along the way!

Recently a train broke down and the electrics failed in the middle of the countryside. We had to use glow-



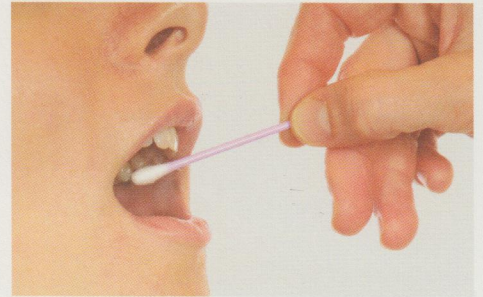
sticks instead of lights! One thing is for sure, no matter how far we come, or what we might have been through on the way, it's all worthwhile when we arrive to see you! We feel extremely privileged to hear about all your experiences, both good and bad, and are here to listen to you.



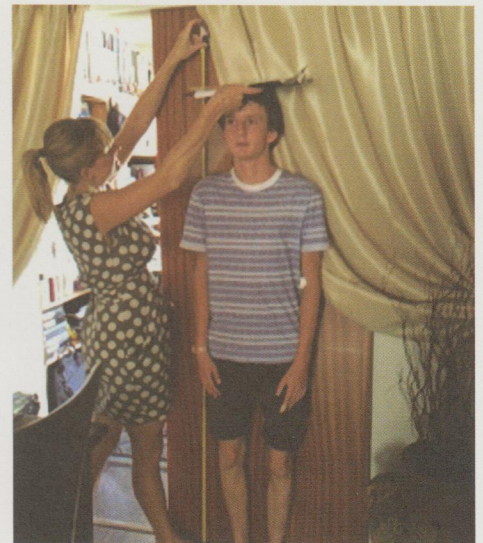
Janis, TEDS-Environment research worker.

Many of you have asked if this will be the last time we'll be visiting you. We hope not! It's been amazing being part of your lives and we want to carry on seeing you for as long as we can.

Some of you have wondered why we're collecting blood this time. We collect this so we can look at your DNA and help us look at how your bodies fight infection. We hope this information might help us make discoveries that can lead to medically useful diagnostic tests, or new treatments, cures and preventions.



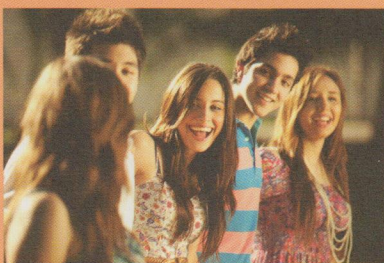
We want to thank all of you for letting us come and get to know you and we feel very lucky to have such a wonderful job!



Marianna, TEDS-Environment research worker, measuring a twin's height.

You!

Here at TEDS-Environment we're really interested to know what's going on in your lives. What's interesting, what's stressing you out? What do you enjoy doing when you're not working or studying? Should we be asking you questions about your 'A' levels? Or if you've started working, what it's like starting working life right now? How big a part of your life are boyfriends and girlfriends? What is it like to be a parent? Let us know what matters to you, and you could make a big difference to the next phase of the TEDS-Environment Study.



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