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Study: Health Status in an invisible population: Carnival and migrant worker children (Kilanowski & Ryan-Wenger, 2007)

Study Purpose: The purpose of the study was to examine the health status of children of itinerant carnival workers and migrant farm workers in the United States.

Research Methods: A total of 97 boys and girls younger than 13 years were recruited into the study. All children received an oral health screening and were measured for height and weight. Parents completed questionnaires about their children's health and healthcare, and most brought health records from which information about immunizations was obtained.

Ethics-Related Procedures: The families were recruited through the cooperation of gatekeepers at farms and carnival communities in 7 states. Parents were asked to complete informed consent forms, which were available in both English and Spanish. Children who were older than 9 were also asked whether they would like to participate, and gave verbal consent. Confidentiality was a concern to both the families and the gatekeepers. The researchers needed to assure all parties that the data would be confidential and not used against families or facilities. Data were gathered in locations and time periods that had been suggested by the carnival managers and farm owners so that parents did not need to forfeit work hours to participate in the study. Migrant farm workers were often eager to participate, and often waited in line to sign the consent forms. At the conclusion of the encounter, the researchers gave the parents a written report of the children's growth parameters and recommendations for follow-up. In appreciation of the parents' time, \$10 was given to the parents, and the child was given an age-appropriate nonviolent toy of their choice. Children were also given a new toothbrush. The IRB of the Ohio State University approved this study.

Key Findings: Carnival children were less likely than migrant children to have regularly scheduled well-child examinations and to have seen a dentist in the previous year. Among children ages 6 to 11, the itinerant children in both groups were substantially more likely to be overweight than same-aged children nationally.