

LONGITUDINAL STUDIES: HISTORY

Longitudinal studies have a rich history that can be traced back centuries. One of the earliest examples of a longitudinal analysis occurred **during the 17th century** in what is now **Canada** when **King Louis XIV** gathered information from his population. He collected this information periodically to understand the **health and economic viability of his colonies**. This practice was called the "enquêtes" or inquiries, and they were conducted by intendants, who were responsible for the administration of the king's colonies.

The oldest recorded longitudinal study on growth was conducted in the **18th century** by **Count Philibert Gueneau de Montbeillard**. He **measured his son every six months** and published the information in the encyclopedia "Histoire Naturelle." This study provided early insights into growth patterns and helped lay the groundwork for subsequent studies on growth and development.

In **the early 20th century, the Genetic Studies of Genius** (also known as **the Terman Study of the Gifted**) began in 1921. Psychologist Lewis Terman's goal was to examine the similarities among gifted children and disprove the common assumption at the time, which was that gifted children were "socially inept." The study recruited 1,528 children who scored in the top 1% on IQ tests and followed them throughout their lives. The study was unique at the time because it began during the childhood of the participants and continued into their adulthood.

Since then, longitudinal studies have become increasingly popular across a wide range of fields. They have been used to study the effects of environmental exposures on health, the development of mental health disorders, the impact of educational interventions, and many other topics. Longitudinal studies have also become more complex, using advanced statistical methods and incorporating biomarkers, genetic data, and other types of measurements to provide a more comprehensive picture of health and development over time.

References

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