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Frontiers in child and adolescent psychiatry

The DREAM BIG project as a model for harmonizing early measures of parental care and parent-child interactions across epidemiological cohorts

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Parenting is important for a child's growth. However, the effects of parenting also depend on the child's characteristics, including their genes. To understand the role of parenting better, we need to study how parents behave, how children react to parenting, and how children's mental health is affected.

In the future, we need to not only be concerned about sample sizes that limit testing of comprehensive models of child development but also the need to replicate findings across multiple settings and samples.

Our paper talks about a way to make it easier to replicate studies that look at how parents and children interact. This method is called *retrospective data harmonization.* It helps reduce some of the difficulties in replication. This paper illustrates retrospective data harmonization using two approaches.

The **DREAM BIG consortium** harmonizes key measures across seven independent cohorts to explore the early life origins of major psychiatric disorders in childhood. DREAM BIG is doing this by studying how the environment before birth, genes, and how parents care for their children affect child mental health.

The **CATS-project** studies how mothers interact with their children by harmonizing measures across multiple studies. This method first looks at the ideas behind the measurements and then the measurements themselves before harmonizing the original data.

Both the *DREAM BIG* and *CATS* approaches are useful in organizing data collected from different studies that use different tools. This makes it easier for researchers to compare findings across studies, thereby addressing the replication crisis ever so present in science.