NlsyLinks: An R Package Facilitating BG Research with the NLSY  
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The NLSY has provided behavioral genetic researchers with a nationally representative family-based kinship sample since the first sibling links were released in the early 1990s. Today we discuss the newest version of the links that incorporate new survey items into our improved linking algorithm, which identifies the level of genetic relatedness among twins, siblings and cousins. The substantive presentations in this symposium demonstrate how the new links provide (a) increased flexibility, (b) higher power and (c) access to spatially-inspired techniques. This presentation focuses on the mechanical aspects of the links. First, the algorithm is discussed, and then the companion R package is introduced.

The NlsyLinks package takes over many of the manual and error-prone tasks required in BG research, such as data manipulation and specification of biometrical models. Entire univariate ACE analyses can be completed with fewer than ten lines of code. The package’s documentation and vignettes initially showcase basic analyses, which should lower the barriers of entry facing those new to the NLSY or BG research. The example analyses progressively grow in complexity to latent models, which should help experienced researchers be more efficient with their existing analyses. As a result, a wide range of behavior genetic researchers are relieved of many mechanical details and can dedicate more time to their substantive efforts.

Development versions are available at <http://r-forge.r-project.org/projects/nlsylinks/> and stable versions are periodically uploaded to <http://r-forge.r-project.org/projects/nlsylinks/>.