



IN THIS ISSUE

IN the search for more direct and specific evidence on the relation of social and other environmental factors to the growth and health of children and to the occurrence of physical and mental disabilities in populations, research workers have turned increasingly to studies on groups of people observed over a period of years. But families move or lose interest and fail to cooperate, and the loss of such families may have serious consequences to the purposes of the study. Using data from a ten-year survey in England, Dr. J. W. B. Douglas and Miss J. M. Blomfield analyzed the effects of family moves on the composition of the survey group and studied the accuracy of respondents' reports under various conditions. They report the results of their analysis in the article entitled "The Reliability of Longitudinal Surveys."



With more than three million babies born annually in the hospitals of the United States, it is interesting to review the rapid change which has occurred in cultural attitudes toward obstetrical care. In "Hospital Care and the Vanishing Midwife," Paul H. Jacobson presents data that describe the changes in obstetrical care in the past fifty years. Midwife deliveries were about 40 per cent of the confinements forty years ago; in the next twenty years they had decreased to about 10 per cent and the decrease has continued. The majority of confinements attended by physicians were in the home until 1937. Between 1937 and 1947, hospital deliveries increased sharply from 45 to 85 per cent and the percentage is still rising.



A paper "Attitudes of Males Toward Family Planning in a Western Indian Village" is presented in this issue by William A. Morrison of the Department of Rural Sociology of the University of Connecticut. The analysis is based upon a field study conducted in Badlapur, a village of Bombay State, India. It represents one of the first studies to be conducted in conjunction with a clinic where chemical-mechanical contraceptives were made available to a village population under supervision of the Family Planning Association of India.



One of the questions asked of husbands and wives in the Indianapolis Study was number of children that they had wanted at the time of marriage. The replies to this question are analyzed in relation to actual fertility of the couple and to fertility-planning status in an article by H. V. Muhsam and Clyde V. Kiser, entitled: "The Number of Children Desired at the Time of Marriage." The authors consider some of the characteristics of the data and possible biases and pitfalls that may be inherent in various types of studies on the subject considered. This is the thirty-second of a series of articles being published in the *Quarterly* under the general title Social and Psychological Factors Affecting Fertility.