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**Intimate Relationships and the Environment: Developmental Transition of
Caregiving Activities among the !Xun of North-central Namibia**

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Researchers have considered that the San, whose foraging lifestyle is well known, provide vital clues to understanding the essence of human caregiving. San children form extremely close relationships with their mothers. The San consist of several groups, among which the Ju|'hoan are the best known. This study focused on caregiving activities among the !Xun, who are closely associated with agropastoral peoples and are neighbors of the Ju|'hoan. Three major domains of caregiving (physical care, verbal utterances, and feeding) were examined. Although young !Xun children formed close physical bonds with their mothers, other caregivers also played important roles in childcare. Female and male children and female adolescents engaged considerably in caregiving activities, in contrast to their Ju|'hoan counterparts. These young !Xun contributed most to physical care, followed by verbal utterances and feeding. Konner (2005) explained differences in caregiving activities among foraging groups in terms of the diversity of accessible resources. This argument is also applicable to the differences observed between the nomadic Ju|'hoan and the sedentary !Xun. Based on this evidence, I reconsidered the relationships among ecology, subsistence activities, and patterns of caregiver–child interactions.