

Table 7 Distribution of adjustment ratings

Period	Rating				
	1	2	3	4	5
Adjustment <sub>1</sub>					
National	12.4	19.5	33.6	20.4	14.2
West Aust.	9.4	18.8	33.3	25.0	13.5
Adjustment <sub>2</sub>					
National	13.0	15.0	23.0	21.0	28.0
West Aust.	6.2	12.4	24.7	35.1	21.6

per cent did not. This distribution indicates that this recruitment goal was achieved.

### Relinquishment as a stressful life-event

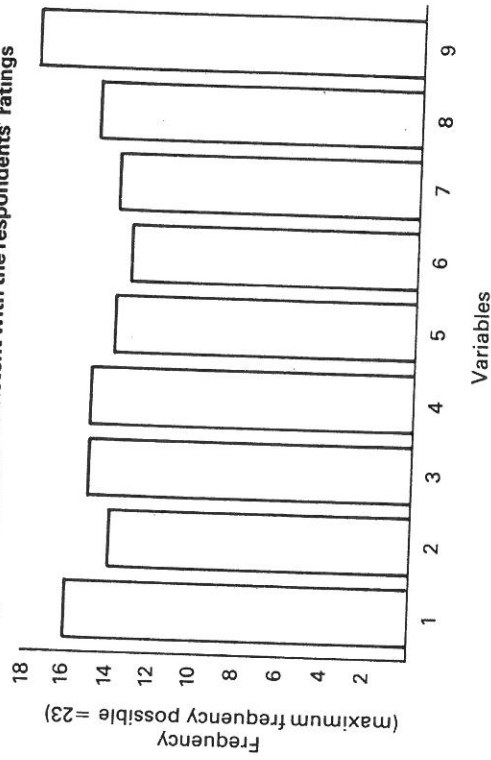
The theoretical model for this study assumed that relinquishment was a stressful life-event. The respondents were asked to rate the severity of stress they experienced as a result of having relinquished their child compared with other major events in their life (a rating of '5' corresponded to 'the most stressful thing I have ever experienced'). The mean rating was 4.25 with a standard deviation of .95 (Western Australian sample). Fifty-three per cent of the Western Australian respondents and 58.8 per cent of the National sample reported that the relinquishment of a child was the most stressful thing they had ever experienced.

### 2: Questionnaire: interview consistency

The interviewer rated how she thought the respondent would have scored on key variables, given the information elicited during the interview. The interviewer then noted whether the interview-rated score was 'greater' than, 'less' than or 'consistent' with the respondent's self-rated score on the relevant items of the questionnaire. Figure 2 shows the distribution of the number of times the interviewer's ratings on key variables was consistent with the respondents' ratings. From 56.5 per cent to 78.3 per cent of the interviewer's and respondents' ratings were consistent (median = 65.2 per cent,  $n = 23$ ).

The interviewer also rated the degree to which information recorded in the questionnaire was generally consistent with what had been learned during the interview on a four point

Figure 2 Distribution of the number of times the interviewer's ratings on key variables were consistent with the respondents' ratings



Variable 1 Adjustment<sub>1</sub> (Question C3)  
 2 Adjustment<sub>2</sub> (Question G6)  
 3 Social Support<sub>E</sub> (Question C4)  
 4 Social Support<sub>S</sub> (Question G1)  
 5 Expression of Feelings<sub>E</sub> (Question C5)  
 6 Expression of Feelings<sub>S</sub> (Question G2)  
 7 Sense of Loss<sub>E</sub> (Question C8)  
 8 Sense of Loss<sub>S</sub> (Question G5)  
 9 Degree of stress experienced, compared with other stressful life-events (Question D2)

( $E$  = in the 12 months following relinquishment;  $S$  = in the period between 12 months after relinquishment and the last year.)

scale (a rating of '4' corresponded to 'completely consistent'). The mean rating was 3.09 with a standard deviation of .60 ( $n = 23$ ).

### 3: Psychological impairment of relinquishing mothers

The women completed the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), a measure of psychological impairment, and the scores of the Western Australian sample were compared with the scores of a matched sub-sample of a representative sample of women from metropolitan Perth. Table 8 presents the means and standard deviations of the GHQ scores for the Western Australian relinquishing mothers group and the comparison