

National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979: XRND Variables

Family Structure Snapshot

Variable Notes

- 1 Exercise caution when drawing conclusions based on household characteristics using NLSY79 data. The large number of multiple respondent households in the sample may skew the data on certain characteristics if the analysis is performed at the respondent level rather than at the household level.

Respondents

- 2 The youth respondents that comprise the NLSY79 sample were born between 1957 and 1964 (ages 14 to 21 at first interview) and 45-53 at the most recent (Round 23, 2008) interview. The survey began with 12,686 youth respondents and consists of 3 subsamples:
 - 1). A cross-sectional sample of 6,111 youth respondents designed to represent the noninstitutionalized civilian population in the U.S. in 1979 and born between January 1, 1957, and December 31, 1964 (ages 14-21 as of December 31, 1978).
 - 2). A supplemental sample of 5,295 youth respondents designed to oversample for civilian Hispanic (or Latino) and Black youth and economically disadvantaged non-Black/non-Hispanic respondents living in the U.S. in 1979. Beginning in Round 13 (1991), none of the 1,643 members of the economically disadvantaged, non-Black/non-Hispanic sample were eligible for interview. Although the entire economically disadvantaged, non-Black/non-Hispanic subsample was dropped following the 1990 survey, the 'Reason for Noninterview' variable has only 1,621 respondents listed as "supplemental poor white sample dropped." The remaining 22 respondents died prior to the dropping of the subsample. These individuals continue to be classified as "deceased." For further information, refer to the "Reasons for Noninterview" section.
 - 3). A military sample of 1,280 designed to represent the population serving in one of the four branches of the U.S. military as of September 30, 1978, and born between January 1, 1957, and December 31, 1961 (ages 17-21 as of December 31, 1978). Beginning in Round 7 (1985), 1,079 members of the military sample were no longer eligible for interview; 201 respondents randomly selected from the military sample remained in the survey.

Users can identify whether each respondent was a member of the cross-sectional, supplemental, or military sample type by referring to the sample type variable (see variable R0173600).

- 3 The NLSY79 has multiple respondent households; the 12,686 round 1 youth respondents originated from 8,770 unique households--2,862 households included more than one NLSY79 respondent (53% of the sample). The most common relationship between multiple respondents living in the same household was that of siblings (n=5,863).

Siblings may be biological, step, or adopted. Some households may include both siblings and spouses, as well as respondents with other relationships.*

Because household screener information was not collected for the military sample, military units cannot be multiple respondent households.*

[*Taken directly from Sample Design & Screening Process](#)

- 4 Information on who the respondents are for each survey question (i.e. the question universe) are provided for Round 1 (1979) thru Round 18 (1998) in the NLS Investigator (the NLS on-line electronic codebook) and are subsequently not in the Round 23 (2008) snapshot. Examining the Round 23 questionnaire in conjunction with the NLS Investigator can help users determine respondents for individual questions.

Variable Name

- 5 The name of each individual variable as it is identified in the data file. Because similar questions are asked repeatedly (over time) in the NLSY79, each question had to be given a unique variable name to distinguish the respondents' answers to the same questions over time. The variable names and question names associated with each variable both appear in the NLS Investigator--the NLS on-line electronic codebook.

[NLS Investigator](#)

Question Name

- 6 The name given to each unique question in the questionnaire. Because the NLSY79 data are longitudinal and ask many of the same questions in multiple survey rounds, this allows--with the use of the variable name--researchers to identify respondents' answers to the same questions over time. The question names along side the questionnaire also allow researchers to determine the flow of the questionnaire and who answered which questions and why. It's important to note that in the Investigator, the universe of respondents is not always identified--particularly in the newer rounds. Additionally, the NLSY advises users to reference the associated questionnaires to help them determine who was asked each question in a given round. Users should also note that question names were changed in the NLSY79--the original question names are in parentheses after their new names. These original question names are needed to connect questions in the questionnaires with the NLS Investigator.

Documentation

- 7 Variable information is provided via the NLSY79 User's Guide. The User's Guide is organized into topical areas. It is accessible through the NLS website and via the NLS Investigator electronic codebook.

a. [Codebook Supplement-Appendix 5](#)

b. [Fertility](#)

c. [Marital Status, Marital Transitions & Attitudes](#)

Additional Links:

[NLSY79 User's Guide](#)

[Topical Guide to NLSY79 Data](#)

[NLS Investigator](#)

Area of Interest

- 8 Also known as the electronic codebook location. The NLS Investigator (used to access the electronic codebook) is divided into separate "sections" referred to as *Areas of Interest* to help users identify variables.

a. Fertility & Relationship History/Created

[NLS Investigator](#)

- 9 Unweighted frequencies given for the LAST VARIABLE (round 23).

- 10 The label for response category 0 changed from 1979 to 1980; from (0) No spouse to (0) Never reported spouse.

- 11 This variable (representing the number of spouse/partners reported), in conjunction with the variable representing the relationship code of current spouse/partner, allows users to establish the ID number of the current spouse/partner. For respondents with no current spouse/partner, this variable reflects the ID number of the most recent spouse/partner, if any.

- 12** The label for response categories changed from 1979 to 1980; in 1979 -999 was "No reported spouse/partner" in 1980 -999 was changed to "Never reported spouse/partner" and 0 was added for the response "No current spouse/partner."
- 13** Multiple variables are associated with this one question. The unweighted frequencies (or valid cases where applicable) displayed are associated with the (numerically) first variable associated with this question.

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