

- 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.

Documentation

5 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.

Links:

[NLSY79 User's Guide](#)

[Topical Guide to NLSY79 Data](#)

[Codebook Supplement-Appendix 5](#)

[Family Background](#)

[Fertility](#)

[Gender](#)

[Household Composition](#)

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

[NLS Investigator](#)

Area of Interest

6 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.

[NLS Investigator](#)

a. Children

b. Common

c. Family Background

d. Fertility & Relationship History/Created

e. Household Record

f. Key Variables

g. Marriage

Variable Name

7 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 electric codebook.

[NLS Investigator](#)

Question Name

8 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.

Household Roster

9 Household information was originally collected in a Household Screener. The resulting variables have a prefix of HHS in their question name. The proper respondent for the screener is the Householder or the Householder's spouse. A Householder is defined as the person who rents or owns home the youth respondent resides in. If there is more than one person listed on a lease, any person listed is an acceptable screener respondent. The only caveat is the householder (or their spouse) must be someone currently living at the selected address. If there isn't someone who fits this description, then the most knowledgeable adult who lives at the selected address is the appropriate respondent. A "knowledgeable adult" should be the person age 18 or over who know the most about the persons living in the household. Someone under the age of 18 can be accepted only if there is no one living in the household who is 18 or over. For more information, see the Household Screener Information link below.

[Household Screener Information](#)

During the interview--prior to the administration of the main questionnaire, respondents (or, in some cases, their parents) answered questions about household members in a Household Interview Form. Information from the Household Interview Form was transcribed onto a "household enumeration" also known as a household roster--a grid for organizing information about household members--and is included in the "Household Record." The variables from the household enumeration included in this Measure Snapshot include relationships of each household member to the youth respondents, and the sex of each household member. For a list of all possible relationship classifications between youth respondents and their respected household members, click on the Roster Response Sheet link below.

[Roster Response Sheet](#)

In the NLSY79 the word "household" refers to all those people living with the respondent at the respondent's primary residence at the time of interview. The respondent's primary residence is considered their usual or permanent residence--this applies to all respondents except those living in military quarters; their primary/usual residence is their dwelling unit (e.g. military family housing).

There are four versions of the Household Roster fielded:

- 1).** Version A- Conducted with the parent of the respondent if the respondent is living in the parental home
- 2).** Version B1- Conducted by the youth respondent if the respondent is living in a dorm, jail, hospital, or other temporary living quarter
- 3).** Version B2- Conducted by the youth respondent if the respondent is a member of the military subsample
- 4).** Version C- Conducted by the youth respondent if the respondent is living in their own dwelling unit, orphanage, religious institution, or other living quarters.

There are a series of variables entitled "Version of Household Record Used" for the 1979-1980 and 1982-1986 surveys. Beginning in 1987, only one version of the household interview was conducted because all respondents had reached their 22nd birthday with many living independently of their parents.

The majority of household roster enumerations are done with respect to the youth respondent. There are two exceptions; the household screener variables (HHS variables--those specific to family members) and one series of the 1979 household record variables.

10 There are over 90 possible types of relationships reported. For a list of all possible relationship categories, please see the Roster Response Sheet for the two different relationship rosters used.

- 11** Due to the many possible response categories--in an effort to conserve space--the response category display has been collapsed. As a result, valid cases are provided for this variable instead of unweighted frequencies.
- 12** 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.
- 13** The respondent listed differs from that which is reported by the NLS Investigator. The modification was done to account for the valid skips on this question/variable.
- 14** The frequencies shown on this variable do not total 12,686 because one case has an out of range value
- 15** The two people coded as valid skips should have been coded as invalid skips.
- 16** The NLS Investigator says that all respondents were in the universe for this question; however, there are many valid skips on this question and we are not able to determine the true respondents for this question.

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