

Health and Retirement Study (1998 - 2008)

Older Adult Family Relationships

Variable Notes

- 1 All variables are from the HRS core data. Please note that while other data products are available (exit interviews with proxy members following a respondent's death, off-year studies on various topics, cross-wave files), all variables used in the snapshot are from the core HRS. Question wording is taken from the HRS questionnaire for the respective wave (available at <http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/index.php?p=qnaires>). These questions are also available via the HRS online codebooks (available at <http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/index.php?p=showcbk>), although users should be aware that there are some slight discrepancies in format between the two.
- 2 The HRS questionnaire often utilizes skip patterns that reference multiple other core variables or variables from previous waves (for reinterviewed respondents). Users should be aware that while missing values can denote missing responses, respondents are often coded missing *not* because of nonresponse, but rather because the question is inapplicable or because the respondent provided the information at a different point in the HRS questionnaire. Careful attention to the codebook and HRS questionnaire is needed to determine individuals who were skipped from the question and why in order to assign the correct values. Use of the original questionnaire (in lieu of relying only on the online codebook) is often advisable in order to determine the relevant skip patterns. Questionnaires for all waves are available on the HRS website (<http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/index.php?p=qnaires>).
- 3 The codebook location refers to the section of the HRS in which the question is asked. The HRS is divided into a number of topical sections within each wave, and the relevant section is specified in this column.
- 4 Variables in the HRS are labeled beginning with a letter that corresponds to the correct wave. For example, 1998 core HRS variables generally begin with "F," 2000 core variables with "G," 2002 with "H," 2004 with "J," 2006 with "K," and 2008 with "L."
- 5 In 1998 through 2002, these relationship quality questions are only asked of new respondents, new spouse/partners, or of respondent who has formed a new marriage/cohabiting relationship. In 2004 and later, these questions are asked only of those with a new spouse/partner. Spouse/partners of HRS respondents become included in the HRS as separate respondents.
- 6 These questions are asked only of a subsample of HRS respondents selected to participate in an experimental module.
- 7 These questions are from the leave-behind psychosocial questionnaire (administered beginning in 2004 and repeated/expanded in 2006 and 2008), of which only a subsample of HRS respondents are selected to be given a leave-behind questionnaire (the same respondents do not receive this questionnaire in each of the 2004 through 2008 waves). Users should refer to the HRS User Guide publication "Guide to Content of the HRS Psychosocial Participant Lifestyle Questionnaires," available on the HRS website (<http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/sitedocs/userg/HRS2006LBQscale.pdf>). As described in this document, "The purpose of the Leave-Behind Questionnaire is to collect additional information from respondents without adding to the interview length" (p. 4 of Documentation Report Version 2.0).

- 8 This variable is a household-level variable answered only by the household's *coverscreen respondent*. For married/cohabiting respondents, in which both spouses/partners become part of the HRS, only one spouse/partner provided the coverscreen questionnaire information. In order to link this information to both spouses' individual records, users must merge the coverscreen respondent's information (from a household-level file) onto the individual record of the non-coverscreen respondent. After doing this, users must then be careful when recoding data to recognize that this information has been provided by his/her spouse/partner and code it accordingly. Clear instructions on conducting such a merge are available on the HRS website in the document "An Elementary Cookbook of Data Management using HRS Data with SPSS, SAS, and Stata Examples" (available at <http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/sitedocs/dmgt/ElementaryCookbook.pdf>).
- 9 This variable is a household-level variable answered only by the household's *family respondent*. For married/cohabiting respondents, both partners become part of the HRS, but only one provided family information. In order to link this information to both spouses' individual records, users must merge the family respondent's information (from a household-level file) onto the individual record of the non-family respondent. After doing this, users must then be careful when recoding data to recognize that this information has been provided by his/her spouse/partner and code it accordingly. Clear instructions on conducting such a merge are available on the HRS website in the document "An Elementary Cookbook of Data Management using HRS Data with SPSS, SAS, and Stata Examples" (available at <http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/sitedocs/dmgt/ElementaryCookbook.pdf>).
- 10 This variable is a household-level variable answered only by the household's *financial respondent*. For married/cohabiting respondents, both partners become part of the HRS, but only one provided some financial information. In order to link this information to both spouses' individual records, users must merge the financial respondent's information (from a household-level file) onto the individual record of the non-financial respondent. Clear instructions on conducting such a merge are available on the HRS website in the document "An Elementary Cookbook of Data Management using HRS Data with SPSS, SAS, and Stata Examples" (available at <http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/sitedocs/dmgt/ElementaryCookbook.pdf>).
- 11 These variables come from the Household-Member- and Child-Level Files: "These files contain information provided by the family respondent (sections PR, CS and D) or financial respondent (section J) about each household member or child of the respondent or the child of the respondent's spouse. The files contain one record for each household member or child" (taken directly from "Health and Retirement Study 1998: Data Description and Usage," Final Core Data Release Version 2, May 2003, Revised October 2003, p. 6). Note that when merging these files to an HRS respondent's record, careful attention must be paid to whether the respondent was the family respondent providing the information, or whether their spouse/partner provided the information (e.g., if the family respondent reports that the household member is their sister, then this would need to be recoded to sister-in-law when linking the record with the spouse/partner file).
- 12 These variables come from the Helper-Level File: "This file contains information provided by each respondent about help received from a helper other than the respondent's spouse or partner. A helper may be a person or organization who was reported by the respondent as providing help with ADLs or IADLs. If the helper is a child, the record contains information about the child and also about the child's spouse or partner, if any. The file contains one record for help received by the respondent from each helper or, if the helper is a married or partnered child, the helping couple" (taken directly from "Health and Retirement Study 1998: Data Description and Usage," Final Core Data Release Version 2, May 2003, Revised October 2003, p. 7).

- 13 These variables come from the Transfer-to-Child-Level Files: "This file contains information provided by the family respondent about transfers of money to a child, children, grandchild or grandchildren. The file contains one record for each transfer" (taken directly from "Health and Retirement Study 1998: Data Description and Usage," Final Core Data Release Version 2, May 2003, Revised October 2003, p. 7). Note that when merging these files to an HRS respondent's record, careful attention must be paid to whether the respondent was the family respondent providing the information about the child, or whether their spouse/partner provided the information (e.g., if the family respondent reports that the household member is their sister, then this would need to be recoded to sister-in-law when linking the record with the spouse/partner file).
- 14 These variables come from the Transfer-from-Child-Level Files: "This file contains information provided by the family respondent about transfers of money from a child, children, grandchild or grandchildren. The file contains one record for each transfer" (taken directly from "Health and Retirement Study 1998: Data Description and Usage," Final Core Data Release Version 2, May 2003, Revised October 2003, p. 7). Note that when merging these files to an HRS respondent's record, careful attention must be paid to whether the respondent was the family respondent providing the information about the child, or whether their spouse/partner provided the information (e.g., if the family respondent reports that the household member is their sister, then this would need to be recoded to sister-in-law when linking the record with the spouse/partner file).
- 15 This variable indicates date current marriage began for those married only once. For those married more than once, this is not the date the current marriage began; instead, it is the date of the first marriage

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