

An Overview of Counting Couples Conferences

Counting Couples I

- December 13-14, 2001
- NIH campus
- 90 participants

Counting Couples I

- Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics www.childstats.gov
- Workshop organized by Lynne Casper and Jason Fields
- Committee: Frank Avenilla, Jeffrey Evans, Robert Kominski, Martin O'Connell, Charles Pierret, William Mosher, Theisa Garner, David Johnson, Jay Meisenheimer, Julie Issacs, Kelleen Kaye, Linda Mellgren, Shelly Jackson, Deborah Rose, Susan Schechter, Tracy Snell, Jerry West

Counting Couples I

- Bring together policy makers, researchers, and professionals
- Assess and improve current status of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and cohabitation

COUNTING COUPLES: Improving Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, and Cohabitation Data in the Federal Statistical System

Highlights from a
National Workshop
December 13 and 14, 2001
The National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland 20892



Sponsored by:
The Data Collection Committee
of the Federal Interagency Forum
on Child and Family Statistics

Counting Couples I

- Report
- 14 Targets of Opportunity
- Measurement of Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, & Cohabitation
- Measuring the Causes and Consequences of Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, & Cohabitation
- http://www.childstats.gov/pdf/other_pubs/ccr.pdf

Measurement of Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, & Cohabitation

- Provide marriage and divorce data at the national, state, and local levels.
- Standardize marital status information across surveys.
- Collect summary measures of marriage and cohabitation history.
- Collect full marital and cohabitation histories.
- Include special populations.
- Share existing questionnaires and knowledge.
- Improve tabulations and publications of marriage and family formation data

Measuring the Causes and Consequences of Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, & Cohabitation

- Increase the detail of household relationship information
- Develop and test key concepts
- Include measures of family-related values and attitudes
- Obtain information for all fathers and mothers in studies of children
- Develop standard sets of variables to track indicators of the causes and consequences of family change
- Develop a plan for a new family study to examine the causes and consequences of family change
- Field a couples study

Counting Couples II

- November 2003
- NIH campus
- 21 Presentations

Counting Couples II

- NICHD Family and Child Well-Being Research Network; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families; Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics; DBSB NICHD, and Maryland Population Research Center
- Organizers: Sandra Hofferth and Lynne Casper
- Jeff Evans, Peter Brandon, Randal Day, Jeanne Brooks-Gunn, Greg Duncan, Jacqueline Eccles, Kathleen Mullan Harris, Dennis Hogan, Kristin Moore, Elizabeth Peters, Gary Sandefur, Freya Sonnenstein, Naomi Goldstein

Counting Couples II

- Describe the problem or issue of measurement to be addressed and why accurate measurement is important.
- Summarize how demographic phenomenon is measured in public and private survey data collection.
- Discuss limitations in current measurement
- Provide concrete recommendations for improving measures

Handbook of Measurement Issues in Family Research

Edited by
Sandra L. Hofferth
Lynne M. Casper



National Center for
Family & Marriage Research
Bowling Green State University

Counting Couples II

- Handbook of Measurement Issues in Family Research (2007)
Edited by Sandra Hofferth and Lynne Casper
- 21 Chapters Interdisciplinary Researchers
 - Marriage & Cohabitation
 - Separation & Divorce
 - Household Composition & Family Relationships
 - Fathers and Fathering

Recommendations

- Census include better and more inclusive data on marriage and cohabitation.
- Identify all biological parents and any social parents in the household.
- Obtain marital and cohabitation histories for adults.
- Improved family formation data, especially from minority men. Parallel data from mothers and fathers.
- Defining relationship quality and ensure asked in meaningful way across populations.

Counting Couples I & II

- Established a need for improved measurement
- Showcased why high quality measurement matters
- Presented shortcomings and challenges in data infrastructure

- Progress in the last decade on many fronts
- Moving target