The National Longitudinal Surveys

Cohort Overview

NLS Cohorts

- The National Longitudinal Surveys are sponsored by the Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Original Cohorts
  - Older Men
  - Young Men
  - Mature Women
  - Young Women
- NLSY79
  - NLSY79 Child/Young Adult
- NLSY97

NLS Core Data Topics

❑ All surveys (except NLSY79 Child) regularly ask about:

- Employment
- Education and training
- Income and assets
- Marital status
- Fertility and children
- Health
- Household Composition
- Attitudes

Other topics are often added. These may be related to age/life stage of cohort (example: freelance jobs, retirement planning) or to special funding opportunities (example: special series on asthma). The user's guides provide detailed info about ALL the topics available for each cohort.

NLS Original Cohorts

❑ Older Men: 5,020 men age 45-59 in 1966
  ▪ Surveyed regularly through 1983 and again in 1990; 1990 also included widow survey

❑ Young Men: 5,225 men age 14-24 in 1966
  ▪ Surveyed regularly through 1981

❑ Mature Women: 5,083 women age 30-44 in 1967
  ▪ Surveyed regularly through 2003

❑ Young Women: 5,159 women age 14-24 in 1968
  ▪ Surveyed regularly through 2003

OC Sampling Information

- Sampling and all surveys for these cohorts were conducted by the US Census Bureau
- All four cohorts used the same household screening, so there are significant numbers of spouse pairs, parent-child groups, and sibling groups
- All four cohorts include an oversample of blacks

Oversample of blacks ensures that there are enough in the sample for statistical analyses

OC Special Data Collections

- 1990 resurvey of Older Men included interviews with 2,206 widows or family members of deceased respondents
- 1989 Mature Women survey included a special pension matching project
- Final 4 surveys of MW & YW included extensive sections on transfers of time & money to and from parents & children

OC Geographic Data

- The Census Bureau strictly limits release of geographic data; little information is available on public release
- Can apply for special access at Census Research Data Centers
  - OM & YM have state/county of residence
  - MW & YW have much more, incl. state/county, census tract/block, Primary Sampling Unit, names of colleges attended
- Details on applying are available at www.bls.gov/nls/origcohortgeo.htm

NLSY79

- New cohort of 12,686 men and women ages 14-22 as of December 31, 1978
- Due to sample reductions for budgetary reasons, 9,964 respondents remain in the eligible sample
- Surveyed annually through 1994 and biennially since; 23rd round concluded in March 2009

NLSY79 Sampling Information

- Screening conducted in 1978 by NORC
- Includes significant numbers of sibling groups and about 300 spouse/partner pairs
- Includes an oversample of blacks, Hispanics, and poor whites
  - Poor white oversample dropped after 1990
- Includes a sample of 1,280 respondents on active military duty as of 9/30/78
  - All but 201 dropped after 1984

NLSY79 Special Data Collections

- ❑ ASVAB: 94% of the respondents took the ASVAB in 1980; a created AFQT score (math and verbal ability) is available for these respondents

- ❑ High School Survey: School- and respondent-specific information was collected in 1980 for 8,500 respondents

- ❑ Transcript Survey: High school transcripts were collected and coded for more than 9,000 respondents

NLSY79 Geographic Data

- ❑ Limited information is included in the public data set
- ❑ State, county and MSA of residence and other restricted variables are included on the geocode CD
- ❑ Zip code and census tract are available at the BLS offices in DC
- ❑ See the geocode-related questions at www.bls.gov/nls/nlsfaqs.htm for information on accessing these data

NLSY79 Child and Young Adult

- ❑ Biological children of women in the NLSY79 were interviewed/assessed on a biennial basis beginning in 1986

- ❑ Starting in 1994, Young Adults—children age 15 by the end of the survey year— were interviewed using a questionnaire more like their mother's main youth interview

- ❑ Data collection is sponsored by NICHD

- ❑ The user's guide includes information about the sample size for each round

Child Data Topics

- Child Assessments provide information about the child's ability, development, and home environment

- Moms provide information about child background, health, and schooling (became part of main youth interview in 2006)

- Children ages 10-14 report on their parent interactions, friendships, attitudes, alcohol and drug use, and other behaviors (starting in 1988)

Child/YA Special Data Notes

- Child School Survey: In 1995-96, collected school characteristics and child-specific information for about 3,000 children
  - Some data are available only on-site at BLS
- YA geocode CD: Includes state, county and MSA of residence and other restricted variables (see www.bls.gov/nls/nlsfaqs.htm for information on accessing these data)

NLSY97

- New sample of 8,984 respondents ages 12-16 as of December 31, 1996
- Surveyed annually; round 12 completed in May 2009

NLSY97 Sampling Information

- ❑ Screening was conducted by NORC in conjunction with the first round of data collection in 1997
- ❑ Includes a significant number of sibling groups
- ❑ Includes oversamples of black and Hispanic respondents

NLSY97 Special Data Collections

- Round 1 Parent interview: Information available for 88% of youths

- CAT-ASVAB: Completed by 79% of respondents in 1997-98

- School Survey: School characteristic data were collected in 1996 and 2000 (accessible only on-site at BLS)

- High School Transcript Survey: School transcripts were collected for 69% of respondents in 1999-2000 and 2004

NLSY97 Geographic Data

- Limited information is included in the public data set
- State, county and MSA of residence and other restricted variables are included on the geocode CD
- Zip code and census tract are available at the BLS offices in DC, along with the 1996 and 2000 School Survey data
- See the geocode-related questions at www.bls.gov/nls/nlsfaqs.htm for information on accessing these data

NLS Documentation

Where to find everything you need to know

General Documentation

- NLS Website
- NLS News
- NLS Bibliography
- NLS Investigator
- Tutorials

NLS Website

- The NLS website at www.bls.gov/nls offers an overview of the survey program and links to other survey resources. Features include:
  - General description of each cohort
  - NLS-related press releases
  - Frequently asked questions
  - Links to documentation items
  - Link to online NLS Investigator

NLS News

- ❑ The quarterly newsletter discusses topics of interest in the data, announces data releases, reports significant errors, and lists recent NLS research
- ❑ Published online only, on the newsletter page at the BLS website
- ❑ Past issues are also available online

NLS Bibliography

❑ The annotated bibliography is a searchable database of all NLS research known to our staff. Users can search for research by author, title, source, format, topic keywords, or any word in the citation.

- Available online at www.nlsbibliography.org
- Includes form to submit new citations or correct citations in the bibliography
- Provides helpful hints for citing NLS data in research

NLS Investigator

- Another online resource is the "documentation" sections of the Investigator.
  - In the <u>new Investigator</u>, the NLSY97, NLSY79, and NLSY79 Child/YA each have their own cohort-specific pages
  - Original cohort documentation is still available only in the <u>old Investigator</u>; will be moved soon
  - Investigator also includes a <u>user's manual</u> explaining how to use the web interface

Tutorials

- Step-by-step guides to using NLS data
- Tutorials currently available:
  - Constructing Comparable Samples across the NLSY79 and NLSY97
  - Intergenerational Links: NLSY79 Mothers and Their Children
  - Linking Roster Items across Rounds in the NLSY97
  - Matching Cohabiting Partners to Their Characteristics in the NLSY97
  - How to Use the Investigator: Example Using the NLSY97
- Additional tutorials are under development

Cohort-Specific Documentation

- ❑ Questionnaires
- ❑ Codebooks
- ❑ User's Guides
- ❑ Codebook Supplements
- ❑ Geocode Codebook Supplements
- ❑ Errata

Questionnaires

- The goal of the questionnaire is to show the questions asked of the respondents, along with the "skip patterns," so that users know what questions were asked and who answered them

- Because the NLS program has been existence for more than 4 decades, the format of the questionnaire has changed over time

Questionnaires: PAPI years

- PAPI means Paper-and-Pencil Interview
- In early surveys, interviewers had a supply of hard copy questionnaires and filled out one for each respondent. Users can look at the exact paper instrument used by interviewers.
- We scanned the PAPI instruments and made the images available as PDF files. These can be viewed online through the Investigator documentation pages. (Because they are PDF files made from images, these files are quite large.)

Questionnaires: PAPI years

❑ Example: Page from 1967 MW questionnaire

Questionnaires: PAPI years

- ❑ Note that we refer to a single "instrument" for each survey year. However, the "instrument" may actually include several different forms or booklets. For example, a complete set of instruments for a PAPI-year NLSY79 interview might include the main questionnaire, a Household Record form, an Employer Supplement, and a confidential drug use supplement. The various pieces are grouped together on the documentation pages.

Questionnaires: CAPI years

- CAPI means Computer-Assisted Personal Interview
- The computer determines which questions to ask based on internal calculations and skip patterns not seen by the interviewer or respondent.
- CAPI questionnaires are more complicated than PAPI instruments, because computerization permits more complex skip patterns
- To represent the computer-driven interview, the survey program produces a series of "question records," which show both the actual questions and the skip pattern instructions that guide the interview

Questionnaires: CAPI years

❑ For recent rounds, we have created a hyperlinked version of the questionnaire. Users can use the hyperlinks to follow question paths forward or backward through the questionnaire.

❑ CAPI questionnaires can be reached through the documentation pages in Investigator

  ▪ Example: <u>CAPI questionnaire section</u> from NLSY97

Questionnaires: CAPI years

- Although the term CAPI implies an in-person interview, some respondents are interviewed by telephone in each round

- If some aspect of survey procedure differs between in-person and telephone interviews, this will be noted in the user's guide

- The "interview mode" variables identify phone vs. in-person interviews

Codebooks

- Questionnaires show what will be asked during the interview; codebooks show the data actually collected along with other variables created later.

- The codebook is not actually a book or even a set of printouts. Instead, it is a series of computer records, one for each variable in the data set.

- Codebook pages can be accessed through NLS Investigator.

Codebooks: List of Variables

Codebooks: Single Codebook Page
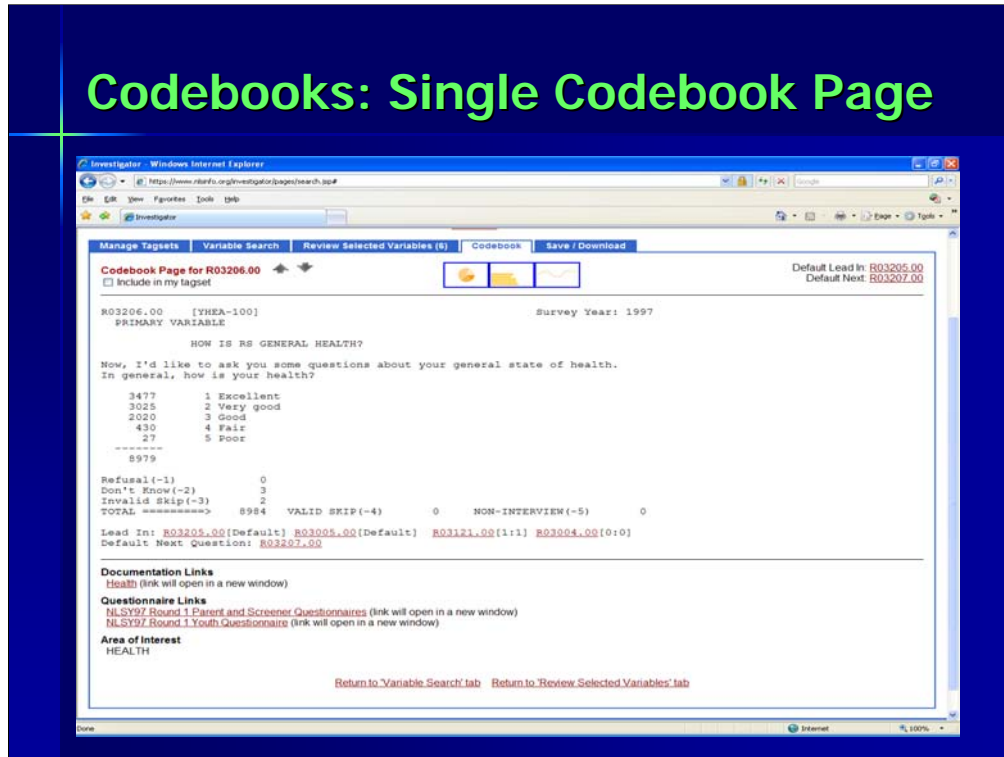
Point out question, answers, documentation links

User's Guides

- Each data release is accompanied by a detailed cohort-specific user's guide
- Technical sections describe survey procedures, sample selection, response rates, changes to the sample over time, and weighting and design effects
- Topical sections summarize questions on a given topic, describe changes across survey rounds, explain which respondents are eligible to answer the questions, describe any created variables related to the topic, and provide "user notes" with important information about various aspects of the data

User's Guides

❑ The guides are posted online in HTML or PDF

❑ You can link to the guides from the main NLS website or the documentation section of Investigator

❑ In the NLSY79 and NLSY97, the guides are also linked to the codebook pages for the individual variables. We try to be thorough and accurate in adding these links, but you may find valuable information in a section of the guide not linked to a given variable.

User's Guides: Asterisk Tables

❑ If you are looking for a quick overview of the questions asked in various survey rounds, check the "asterisk tables" in the appendixes of each guide (note that the table appears in the main "topical guide" section for the NLSY97).

  ▪ Example: NLSY79 asterisk table

Codebook Supplements

- Cohort-specific codebook supplements accompany each data release (PDF or HTML, depending on round)
- These documents, organized in attachments and appendices, contain very detailed technical information about specific NLS variables
  - Example 1: Industry and occupation codes
  - Example 2: Programming code for created variables
- For the NLSY97 and NLSY79, Geocode Codebook Supplements provide similar information for geocode variables

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Errata

- Survey staff exercise great care when processing interview data and creating variables. However, in any large data set errors will inevitably be found.
- Errata pages are maintained for each cohort, linked from the main NLS website and the documentation pages in Investigator
- Users are strongly urged to check these pages to become aware of any issues that might affect their research

For Additional Help

❑ If you don't find the answer to your question in our documentation, you can contact NLS User Services (Steve McClaskie) for assistance

- usersvc@chrr.osu.edu
- 614.442.7366