

Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS) 5 Cycle 3 Tutorial

Questions and Answers from the Webinar Chat

Q. Is there anywhere this type of tutorial is available for Stata?

A. STATA code for analyzing HINTS data can be found in the “Overview” or “Analytics Recommendation Document” that is included in data downloads from the HINTS website.

Q. Do you have any experience / code for analyzing these data with R?

A. We currently don't have code in the R language but are considering it for future iterations.

Q. In terms of linkage have you done or are you considering linkage to respondent EHR data, or for those who have had cancer, to SEER or NPCR?

A. We don't have personally identifying information for HINTS respondents (e.g., social security numbers) that would also for direct person to person linkages.

Q. I was wondering if there is any way to conduct longitudinal analyses using HINTS? As I understand, participants change in every cycle, right?

A. Each HINTS sample is a unique random sample of US, non-institutionalized adults. We don't keep personally identifying information that would allow us to do a longitudinal analysis with the same respondents.

Q. Is there any way to access state/county variables which is not available in public dataset?

A. There are restricted use HINTS data that contain geocodes such as county and state and a subset with zip codes. If you are interested in gaining access to these data, contact us through this link:

<https://hints.cancer.gov/about-hints/contact-us.aspx>

Q. Are there any recommendations for imputations for missing data while using weighted observations.

A. It is up to the analyst to decide what to do about missing data and multiple imputation is considered the gold standard. Also, note that each HINTS iteration should include an imputed INCOME variable that uses Hot Deck imputation.

Q. Is there any plan to assess the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on information seeking in the next iterations of HINTS or perhaps as an adhoc study?

A. The HINTS team is exploring possible ways to assess the impact of the current coronavirus pandemic.

Q. What if we want to combine three cycles together? So, do we need to create 150 new adjusted weight assigning 50 replicated weights per cycle?

A. Yes. See this report for examples: https://hints.cancer.gov/docs/HINTS_IDA_Report.pdf

Q. Where can I find sample code on the website?

A. See “Overview” or “Analytics Recommendation Documents” that are found in the data downloads for example code.

Q. What is the role of Westat?

A. Westat is the main contractor for HINTS and assists with sampling and distributing surveys and collecting data.

Q. Is it appropriate to use HINTS data for causation modeling?

A. HINTS is a cross-sectional survey and so shouldn't be used for causal modeling.

Q. Can you mention again the location of the documentation with recommendations for data analysis?

A. See the respective “Overview” or “Analytics Recommendation Document” that is included in the data downloads from the website.

Q. How to append/merge two HINTS datasets using SAS?

A. See this report for information on merging two iterations of HINTS:
https://hints.cancer.gov/docs/HINTS_Data_Users_Handbook-2008.pdf

Q. Are there HINTS items to measure "health literacy" variables in the previous HINTS cycle dataset or to be used in future HINTS study?

A. See this tool on the HINTS website for a list of almost all questions asked across HINTS iterations. You can search by topic or key words: <https://hints.cancer.gov/view-questions-topics/all-hints-questions.aspx>

Q. How do you make suggestions for questions in the next cycle? I would like to explore the use of telehealth?

A. We plan on soliciting information from HINTS users about topics to be included on future HINTS iterations. Stay tuned.

Q. Between SAS and STATA, which one is more appropriate for HINTS Data?

A. Both are equally good as they both can incorporate the replicate weights in HINTS needed to compute accurate standard errors for statistical modeling.

Q. What years of data is included in HINTS 5 cycle 3?

A. These data were collected between January and April, 2019.

Q. I merged HINTS from the past 7 waves (that is H4 cycles in addition to H5 cycles). The only group differences I have to worry about is for H5C3, right?

A. If you are referring to the differences in the sampling groups in HINTS 5 Cycle 3 (i.e., Paper only; Web option; Web bonus), the answer is yes.

Q. Can HINTS data be linked to BRFSS data?

A. Since we don't have personally identifying information in HINTS, one cannot link at a person to person level. That said, there are geo-codes in the restricted use data that one could link at a geo-coded level. See a previous FAQ for more information.

Q. Is immigration status asked and for which cycle(s)? Is country of birth asked and if so for which cycles?

A. See this tool on the HINTS website for a list of almost all questions asked across HINTS iterations. You can search by topic or key words: <https://hints.cancer.gov/view-questions-topics/all-hints-questions.aspx>

Q. What will be your recommendation for weights if there are differences in predictors for regression (Eg: Age)?

A. For HINTS 5 Cycle 3 analyses, you should focus on assessing for differences in your outcomes when deciding which weights to use. See the "Overview" document included in the data download for additional information on which weights to use.

Q. Are geo-spatial markers available in the public use files?

A. No. However, there are separate restricted use HINTS data that contain geocodes such as county and state and a subset with zip codes. If you are interested in gaining access to these data, contact us through this link: <https://hints.cancer.gov/about-hints/contact-us.aspx>

Q. What's the smallest geography the data is available in?

A. See previous question and answer.

Q. Is STATA code included with SAS in cycle 5?

A. Yes. See the respective "Overview" or "Analytics Recommendation Document" that is included in the data downloads from the website.