

ICPSR 37404

## **Health and Relationships Project, United States, 2014-2015**

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Data Collection Method

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**Study Requirements.** All participants were legally married and had been living together for a minimum of three years at the time of the study. Couples were required to complete at least 6 of the 10 diary questionnaires to be included in the diary data, and 90% of participants completed all 10 days. We asked spouses to complete all questionnaires separately.

**Sample Recruitment.** Sample recruitment occurred in a systematic and purposive way to maximize comparability across same-sex and different-sex married couples. Participants were matched on age, relationship duration, and place of residence. Due to past legal restrictions on marriage for same-sex couples, we measured total relationship duration based on number of years cohabiting and married combined.

Massachusetts was selected as the original study site because it was the first state in the United States to legalize same-sex marriage in 2004 and thus included a substantial number of same-sex couples in long-term unions who could be identified through vital records. However, many couples had moved and/or referred people not living in Massachusetts, so people living outside of Massachusetts were also invited to participate (50% of couples in the sample resided outside of Massachusetts).

Same-sex couples who married between 2004 and 2012 and were between the ages of 35 and 65 were identified through the Massachusetts Registry of Vital Records and invited to participate through letters mailed to their address. About 70% of same-sex couples were recruited in this way. Because of restrictions at the Massachusetts Registry of Vital Records, different-sex couples were recruited using publicly available demographic city lists in Massachusetts. Cities were selected to match city locations of participating same-sex spouses. We used these lists to identify households with two adults between age 35 and 65, and invitations were sent to the addresses. About 40% of different-sex couples were recruited in this way.

Participating same-sex and different-sex couples were then asked to refer couples who met the study requirements. The remaining couples (30% of same-sex and 60% of different-sex couples) were recruited through referrals.

We compared the demographic characteristics of the study sample to national estimates for married couples age 35 to 65 using data from the 2015 American Community Survey (Table 1). The study sample characteristics are similar to national estimates on income, age, and percentage of couples with children under age 18. However, the sample is more educated and includes fewer racial/ethnic minorities than national estimates.

**Table 1.** Demographic Comparisons of Same- and Different-Sex Married Couples in the Health and Relationships Project (HARP) 2015 and the American Community Survey (ACS) 2015

<b>Demographic Characteristic:</b>	<b>Same-Sex Married Couples</b>		<b>Different-Sex Married Couples</b>	
	ACS	HARP	ACS	HARP
Non-White (%)	17%	12%	21%	17%
Median Household Income	\$100,000- \$150,000	\$100,000- \$150,000	\$75,000- \$99,999	\$75,000- \$99,999
College Degree or More (%)	58.6%	84%	46%	73%
Age (mean)	49.93	49.58	50.08	46.22
Children under 18 (%)	30%	28%	61%	64%