

Note: throughout this document, original variable information from IPUMS NHIS is in green, and recoded information from our data set is in black. Case counts are in parentheses.

Dependent Variables

DEMENTIAEV—"have you ever been told by a health professional that you have dementia, including alzheimer's" from 2019-22 and 2007

Recode:

DEMENTIAEVREC

1 No (119185)

2 Yes (1392)

3 Refused/don't know (121)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/DEMENTIAEV#codes_section

LAMEMCONDIF—"Do you have difficulty remembering or concentrating?" From 2010-17, this question was asked to a quarter subsample, and from 2018-2022 was asked of the full sample.

RECLAMEMCONDIF

1 no difficulty (208509)

2 some difficulty (40674)

3 a lot of difficulty (5715)

4 cannot do at all (255)

5 refused, not ascertained, don't know (5429)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/LAMEMCONDIF#codes_section

LAMEMORCON—"have you ever had difficulty remembering, concentrating, or both?"—remembering only, concentrating only, or both, from 2010-22. This variable sorts out responses from the previous variable to clarify whether respondents specifically have difficulty remembering, or concentrating, or both.

RECLAMEMORCON

1 difficulty remembering only (16636)

2 difficulty concentrating only (5908)

3 difficulty with remembering and concentrating (23985)

4 refused/don't know (402)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/LAMEMORCON#codes_section

LAMEMDIFOFT—"how often would you say you have difficulty remembering?"—sometimes, often, or all the time, which focuses on respondents who reported difficulty remembering, from 2010-22.

RECLAMEMDIFOFT

1 all the time (3730)

2 frequently (7549)

3 sometimes (29337)

4 unknown/don't know (353)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/LAMEMDIFOFT#codes_section

Recommended Independent Variables

AGE—note, sample is constrained to those 85 and younger, and dependent variables were only asked of those over 18

Recoded sample deletes all cases under 18

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/AGE#codes_section

RECAGEGROUP—recode of AGE into groups

- 1 18-25 (96323)
- 2 26-35 (132643)
- 3 36-45 (130444)
- 4 46-55 (135757)
- 5 56-65 (127644)
- 6 66-75 (88369)
- 7 76-80 (26832)
- 8 81-85 (33799)
- 9 unknown (missing) (301)

SEX—since 2019, there are categories for unknown don't know and unknown refused

Suggested data recode deletes the 10 cases that are unknown or refused, otherwise not recoded

- 1 male (364033)
- 2 female (408069)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/SEX#codes_section

SEXORIEN—sexual orientation of lesbian or gay, straight, bisexual, something else, don't know, unknown refused, and unknown not ascertained. Only asked since 2013

RECSEXORIEN

- 1 lesbian or gay (5375)
- 2 straight (288746)
- 3 bisexual (3709)
- 4 something else, don't know, refused (5505)
- 5 not ascertained (7476)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/SEXORIEN#codes_section

MARSTCOHAB—current legal marital status plus cohabiting partners

RECMARSTCOHAB

- 1 married, living with spouse (397079)
- 2 married spouse absent, separated, divorced, widowed (150228)
- 3 cohabiting (55853)
- 4 never married (162966)
- 5 unknown (5986)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/MARSTCOHAB#codes_section

MARRIEDEV—if the respondent has ever been married (only asked since 2019)

RECMARRIEDEV

- 1 No (28990)
- 2 Yes (32669)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/MARRIEDEV#codes_section

RACENEW—the only categories that are back compatible are white only, Black only, American Indian only, Asian only, and other.

RECRACE

- 1 white only (589961)
- 2 Black only (99670)
- 3 Indigenous only (8442)
- 4 Asian only (51587)
- 5 Other (16611)
- 6 Unknown (5841)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/RACENEW#codes_section

HISPETH—the only categories that are back compatible are not Hispanic, Mexican, and other Hispanic

RECHISPETH

- 1 not Hispanic (634890)
- 2 Mexican (28305)
- 3 Other Hispanic (51621)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/HISPETH#codes_section

USBORN—born outside or within the U.S.

RECUSBORN

- 1 no (152135)
- 2 Yes (614364)
- 3 unknown (5613)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/USBORN#codes_section

YRSINUSG—grouped estimates of number of years spent in the U.S. for people born outside the U.S

RECYRSINUS

- 1 0-5 years (13143)
- 2 6-14 years (37332)
- 3 15+ years (97846)
- 4 unknown 4392)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/YRSINUSG#codes_section

RECIMMIG—combined recoded variable from USBORN and YRSINUSG

- 1 born in US (614364)
- 2 0-5 years in US (13143)
- 3 6-14 years (37332)
- 4 15+ years (97846)
- 5 unknown (4392)

NOWAF—currently in armed forces—yes, no, unknown refused, unknown not ascertained, unknown don't know [not recommended for use alone due to small sample size, see combination recode RECARMED below]

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/NOWAF#codes_section

ARMFEV—ever served in the armed forces for people not currently in the military [not recommended for use alone due to insufficient information, see combination recode REARMED below]

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/ARMFEV#codes_section

REARMED—combined recoded variable from NOWAF and ARMFEV

1 currently or ever in armed forces (64320)

2 never in armed forces (636572)

3 unknown (5612)

EDUC—respondent's highest level of education completed [note: the original coding for this variable is extremely complex and we strongly recommend using the provided recode]

RECEDUC

1 less than high school (106248)

2 High school (203705)

3 Some college (226676)

4 College (142768)

5 MA+ (82401)

6 Unknown (10314)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/EDUC#codes_section

POVERTY—ratio of family income to poverty line, a grouped variable ranging from .5 and under to 5 and over

POVERTYREC

1 Less than 100% of poverty line (92925)

2 101-200% (131725)

3 201-499% (249670)

4 500+% (173645)

5 Unknown (65502)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/POVERTY#codes_section

GOTSTAMPFAM—if any family member received food stamp/SNAP benefits in the last calendar year

GOTSTAMPREC

1 Not in the last year (654444)

2 Yes in the last year (102328)

3 Unknown (15340)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/GOTSTAMPFAM#codes_section

OWNERSHIP—if family owns or rents home

RECOWN

1 owned (499775)

2 renting (241344)

3 other (16209)

4 unknown (14784)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/OWNERSHIP#codes_section

LOWRENT—if family pays lower rent due to a government program, *asked of people in rented housing*

RECLOWRENT

- 1 Not receive government assistance (212464)
- 2 Receives government assistance (27739)
- 3 unknown

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/LOWRENT#codes_section

FSRAWSCORE—family’s raw score on the 30-day food security scale—ranging from 0 to 10 (higher scores indicate more food insecurity) and unknown. Note the large number of missing cases because only focal respondents were asked after 2019

RECFSRAW—recode of FSRAWSCORE into groups

- 1 for 0 (583925)
- 2 for 1-3 (73671)
- 3 for 4-10 (47992)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/FSRAWSCORE#codes_section

DEPFREQ—how often respondent feels depressed. Only asked of a quarter subsample before 2017

RECDEPF

- 1 daily (10827)
- 2 weekly or monthly (30815)
- 3 a few times a year (65779)
- 4 never (144551)
- 5 unknown (8610)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/DEPFREQ#codes_section

WORFREQ—how often the respondent feels worried, nervous, or anxious. Only asked of a quarter subsample before 2017

RECWORF

- 1 daily (27629)
- 2 weekly or monthly (56355)
- 3 a few times a year (77879)
- 4 never (90405)
- 5 unknown (8314)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/WORFREQ#codes_section

EMOSUPPORT—"how often do you feel you get the emotional support you need?" Only available since 2020

RECEMOSUP

- 1 always (24357)
- 2 usually (11870)
- 3 sometimes (5464)

4 rarely (1722)
5 never (2098)
6 unknown (1683)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/EMOSUPPORT#codes_section

ALCSTAT1—recode of alcohol consumption—Less than 12 drinks in lifetime, former drinker (none in past year), current drinker (1+ past year). Not available for 2019 or 2021. Note large number of missing cases because question was only asked of focal respondent [not recommended for use alone due to insufficient information, see combination recode RECODEDRINK below]

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/ALCSTAT1#codes_section

ALCDAYSWK—frequency drank alcohol in the past year, in days per week. Not available for 2019 or 2021. Note large number of missing cases because question was only asked of focal respondent. [not recommended for use alone due to insufficient information, see combination recode RECODEDRINK below]

RECODEDRINK [Combo recode variable of ALCSTAT1 and ALCDAYSWK]

1 Less than 12 drinks in lifetime (64058)
2 No drinks in the past year (54823)
3 Less than 1 per week (102446)
4 1-3 per week (86539)
5 4-7 per week (30192)
6 Unknown (5970)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/ALCDAYSWK#codes_section

SMOKESTATUS2—cigarette smoking

RECSMOKE—recode of SMOKESTATUS2

1 current daily smoker (48640)
2 current sometimes smoker (14777)
3 former smoker (95532)
4 never smoked (242256)
5 unknown (4302)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/SMOKESTATUS2#codes_section

MOD10FWK—frequency of 10 minutes of moderate activity per week in numbers [note codes for extreme values in original data]. Not available for 2019 or 2021

2 recodes are provided:

RECMOD10FWK

1 unable to do this activity (4410)
2 never (124773)
3 less than once per week (7384)
4 once a week (22752)
5 twice a week (33925)
6 three times a week (36177)

7 4-6 times a week (37696)
8 daily+ (70205)
9 unknown (6706)

RECSIMPMOD10—simplified recode of MOD10FWK

1 unable to do this activity (4410)
2 never or less than once a week (132157)
3 1-93—any (200755)
4 unknown (6706)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/MOD10FWK#codes_section

VIG10FWK—frequency of 10 minutes of vigorous activity per week in numbers [note codes for extreme values]. Not available for 2019 or 2021.

Two recodes are provided:

RECVIG10FWK—recode of VIG10FWK

1 unable to do this activity (6547)
2 never (186642)
3 less than once per week (11133)
4 once a week (21031)
5 twice a week (23987)
6 three times a week (31230)
7 4-6 times a week (32203)
8 daily+ (26386)
9 unknown (4869)

RECSIMPVIG10—simplified recode of VIG10FWK

1 unable to do this activity (6547)
2 never or less than once a week (197775)
3 1-93 (134837)
4 unknown (4869)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/VIG10FWK#codes_section

HRSLEEP—usual hours of sleep per day. Not available for 2019 or 2021.

RECSLEEP

1 1-5 hours (30837)
2 6 hours (72552)
3 7 hours (98543)
4 8 hours (103762)
5 9 hours (15540)
6 10+ hours (13834)
7 unknown (8960)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/HRSLEEP#codes_section

HRPROBAMT—amount of trouble with hearing. Not available for 2019 or 2021. 2010-2017 is a random subsample, 2018- is the whole sample

RECHEARING

1 no trouble hearing (211041)

2 little trouble hearing (39411)

3 a lot of trouble or cannot do at all (4844)

4 unknown (5286)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/HRPROBAMT#codes_section

DIABETICEV—ever diagnosed with diabetes. Before 2018, there was also a little used option for “borderline”

RECDIABETIC

1 no (357000)

2 yes or borderline (48155)

[very few unknowns]

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/DIABETICEV#codes_section

CANCEREV—ever diagnosed by a medical professional with any cancer.

RECCANCER

1 no (362220)

2 yes (42903)

[very few unknowns]

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/CANCEREV#codes_section

PAINFREQ3MO—frequency of pain in the past 3 months. Asked of a subsample before 2018, and of the entire sample from 2018 on.

RECPAIN3MO

1 never (77676)

2 some days (88028)

3 most days (18063)

4 every day (31628)

5 unknown (7272)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/PAINFREQ3MO#codes_section

HYPERTENEV—ever told by a health professional they have hypertension, also called high blood pressure. Only asked of focal respondents (hence large number not in universe). (less than 600 unknowns recoded as missing)

RECHYPERTEN

1 no (264675)

2 yes (140242)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/HYPERTENEV#codes_section

HYP2TIME—ever told by a health professional they have hypertension, also called high blood pressure, on more than two different visits. Only asked of focal respondents (hence large number not in universe). (less than 600 unknowns recoded as missing)

RECHYP2TIME

1 no (18290)

2 yes (121628)

https://nhis.ipums.org/nhis-action/variables/HYP2TIME#codes_section

The complete data dictionary and documentation for the entire National Health Interview Survey, including questions from the restricted use files for all years, are available at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/data-questionnaires-documentation.htm>