



MIDUS

Midlife in the United States

A National Study of Health & Well-Being

**Midlife in the United States
MIDUS ARTS Field Report**

**For the
MIDUS ARTS Mail Questionnaire
(P1285)**

FINAL

**University of Wisconsin Survey Center
475 North Charter Street
Madison, WI 53706**

February 18, 2022

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Overview of the Project

The University of Wisconsin Survey Center (UWSC) was hired by Professor Carol Ryff, Director of the University of Wisconsin Institute on Aging (UW-IOA), in November, 2019 to recruit the 3,847 living MIDUS Refresher 1 participants into a supplemental MIDUS project focusing on the arts, comprised of a short self-administered questionnaire. The 12-page questionnaire was entitled, “Activities: Your Last Twelve Months”. Funding for the project was provided by a grant from the University of Wisconsin Madison Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research and Graduate Education (UW-Madison OVCRGE). Project development took place from December, 2019, through April, 2021, with significant delays and revisions due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Survey administration began May 14, 2021. While all recruitment efforts ended on October 14, 2021, returns were accepted through February 8, 2022.

For this project, the UWSC provided assistance with questionnaire and project design and data collection. Data and documentation were provided to MIDUS for analysis and reporting.

The simple response rate for the MIDUS ARTS questionnaire was 64%.

The University of Wisconsin Survey Center

The UW Survey Center (UWSC) is a department of the College of Letters and Science at the University of Wisconsin Madison, and is supported by the College and revenue generated from contractual work. The UWSC serves the survey research needs of University of Wisconsin faculty, staff, and administration; faculty at other universities, federal, state, and local governmental agencies and not-for-profit organizations. The mission of the Survey Center is to assist researchers by providing the highest quality survey research services and as such, the UW Survey Center provides the complete range of survey research capabilities. Faculty Directors at the UWSC during the MIDUS ARTS project included Professor Nora Cate Schaeffer and Associate Professor Jennifer Dykema. John Stevenson is the Associate Director, Kelly Elver is the Director of Project Management, and Steven Coombs is the Field Director. Vicki Lein served as the senior project director on this project and oversaw data collection.

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Project Summary

Target or Survey Population	MIDUS Refresher 1 Sample (national sample and Milwaukee African American oversample)
Sampling frame, coverage, supplier	The client provided sampling frame consisted of a list of MIDUS Refresher sample members. The sample included initial refresher sample recruited into the study in 2012 through 2014, both the national sample (MR1) and the Milwaukee African American oversample (MKER1).
Sampling design, sampling method, and screening for eligibility	All live and cognizant MIDUS Refresher 1 and Milwaukee Refresher 1 sample members were eligible for the MIDUS ARTS study.
Selection of respondent	Sample members were pre-identified based on their previous participation in the MIDUS Refresher 1 as part of the national study or the Milwaukee African American oversample.
Selected and final achieved sample size	Selected 3,847 Achieved 2,444
Weight calculation	Information to calculate sampling weights was not requested.
Modes or methods	MIDUS ARTS was conducted using a self-administered questionnaire sent by mail. The initial questionnaire packet included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover letter • Pre-incentive of \$10 • Self-administered Questionnaire (12 pages) A post-incentive of \$30 was sent to those who completed the questionnaire.
Pre-tracing efforts	Nearly 300 cases with no address information were pre-traced before fielding. An ‘address request letter’ was sent to the 44 cases where no new address could be found, sent to the last known address. If that letter was returned undeliverable, the case was finalized as having no good address and no questionnaire packet was sent. During pre-tracing three additional cases were identified as deceased and ineligible, and another three were held from fielding due to being imprisoned.
Beginning and ending dates of data collection and use of replicates	The field period began on May 14 2021, and ended on February 8, 2022. Sample was fielded in two replicates, the second replicate comprised of 34 cases for which good contact information was found only after the original field date.
Methods for increasing cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address request letter to cases lacking a confirmed address • Cover letter and \$10 pre-incentive included with the initial questionnaire • Reminder post-card • Two follow-up mailings of the questionnaire to non-responders • Post-incentive of \$30
Language of administration	English

Sample Description

The target population included live participants of the MIDUS Refresher 1 (MR1), the national sample recruited in 2013 and 2014, then aged 25 to 74, and live participants of the Milwaukee Refresher 1 (MKER1), the African American oversample recruited in 2012, then aged 25 to 64. Any coverage error for MIDUS ARTS would be determined by the extent to which the client-provided list omitted members of the target population.

Sample members were selected directly from the provided list and no additional screening was done in the questionnaire. The initial sample size was 3,847 MR participants. The final achieved sample size was 2,444. Details about the outcomes of cases and calculation of response rates are given in a later section. MIDUS did not request that the UWSC supply sampling weights, but can use information from their sampling frame and information provided by the UWSC to compute sampling and nonresponse weights if they are needed.

Instrument and Field Materials

Instrument Development

In December, 2019, UWSC staff met with the primary investigator, Dr. Carol Ryff, and Dr. Barry Radler and Dr. Gayle Love, to discuss the MIDUS ARTS instrument and protocols. The UWSC's work on the MIDUS ARTS questionnaire began soon thereafter. Review of the instrument was conducted in an iterative fashion. Questions were revised to reflect best practices in survey design.

While the originally developed questionnaire focused on attendance and participation in live in-person events and activities, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the nation-wide shut downs that followed, the questionnaire was revised to focus on participation in activities that could also be enjoyed in virtual settings, by oneself, or with housemates. Questions were adjusted as circumstances changed, and the field period was delayed to ensure both relevancy and sensitivity to the times. Questions about respondent experiences with COVID-19 were added to the questionnaire, with an understanding that this might have greatly affected participation in arts and leisure activities over the field period.

The final 12-page questionnaire was created in Microsoft Word, and converted to ready-to-print pdf format by April, 2021. The questionnaire was available in English. Questionnaires were printed at UW Printing Services.

Data Entry System

The self-administered questionnaire (SAQ) data entry instrument was developed in CASES 5.5. In CASES, the text of the questionnaire appears question by question on a computer screen and the data entry operator enters the response provided by the respondent. Skip logic is pre-programmed into the system. The system allows for open-ended questions. In addition, the system allows only valid responses; when an invalid response is entered, the computer asks the data entry operator to reenter the response.

Field Materials

Cover letters were developed to accompany each questionnaire mailing. A reminder postcard was created to prompt response.

Project Operations Database

The UWSC created Project Operations Database (POD) was used to manage each case individually. The MIDUS POD stored:

- Respondent contact information
- Important dates such as the dates of mailings and completion
- Information on returned mailings and the results of tracing efforts
- Final case disposition codes

All UWSC tracing work was conducted within the POD, monthly MIDUS Birthday Card lists were generated from the POD, and cases were flagged in the POD for delivery back to MIDUS via a database 'handshake' (detailed in a later section). Queries in the POD were customized to support sample review, progress oversight and reporting, contact delivery and work flow management.

Archiving of Instruments and Field Materials

The questionnaires (including any instruction to respondents), cover letters, and reminder postcards were provided to MIDUS in electronic form. These materials are all archived with the data. Questionnaires will be archived securely for the required seven years and then destroyed.

Overview of Data Collection

Field Period and Procedures

The survey design consisted of a four-wave data collection protocol, as summarized in Table 1. For a small group of cases, where address information was suspect, data collection was preceded by a tracing mailing, an 'address request letter'. The address request letter was sent May 7, 2021, to the 44 cases, grouped into replicate 2. Cases in replicate 2 were fielded, where possible, on a slightly delayed timeline, as shown in Table 1. Overall data collection for the study began May 14, 2021, and ended February 8, 2022.

The first recruitment mailing included a cover letter, a \$10 bill as pre-incentive, the 12-page MIDUS ARTS questionnaire, and a stamped postage-paid reply envelope. The cover letter explained the purpose of the study, conveyed its legitimacy, and emphasized the ongoing importance of MIDUS research. The letter also included the respondent's phone number at the top and asked the respondent to call the MIDUS toll-free number, maintained by the UWSC, to update any outdated information. Telephone confirmation was not needed for MIDUS ARTS, but this measure was added for sample maintenance, in preparation for MIDUS Refresher 2.

Table 1. Overview of data collection

	Wave 1	Wave 2	Wave 3	Wave 4
Description	Full mailing to all (cover letter, \$10 bill pre-incentive, 12-page SAQ, stamped reply envelope).	Postcard reminder to all sample	Full mailing (no incentive) to non-responders	Full mailing (no incentive) to non-responders
Replicate 1	May 11, 2021		June 11, 2021	July 12, 2021
Number mailed	3,797		1,908	1,161
Replicate 2	June 3, 2021		July 6, 2021	August 4, 2021
Number mailed	34		17	14
Total mailed*	3,831	3,805	1,925	1,475

*No SAQ sent to 6 cases identified as deceased or imprisoned.

*No SAQ sent to 10 cases with no good address.

Of the final 2444 completed questionnaires returned, 1839, or 75% were returned following the first mailing and postcard; 414 or 17% were returned following the second mailing of the questionnaire; and the final 191, or 8% were returned in response to the last mailings to non-responders.

Responses began to be received by the UWSC on May 17, 2021, and continued to be returned until October 8, 2021. Data collection was reopened to capture delayed returns through February 8, 2022, with recognition that during the field period the US Postal Service had unprecedented delays in processing mail.

Respondents mailed completed questionnaires to the UWSC in the postage-paid envelopes provided.

Study Protocols

The MIDUS ARTS mailed self-administered questionnaire protocol was as follows.

- 1) Questionnaire packet sent to respondents contained the following:
 - a. Personalized cover letter
 - b. Ten dollar bill pre-incentive
 - c. Self-administered questionnaire (12 pages)
 - d. Stamped reply envelope
- 2) Reminder postcard sent one week after the questionnaire was mailed encouraged respondents to complete and return their questionnaire as soon as possible.
- 3) *For non-responders:*
A second questionnaire was sent, similar to the first but with no pre-incentive about 4 weeks after the first questionnaire packet postdate. A third questionnaire was sent to non-responders in another 4 weeks.
- 4) *For responders:*
A post-incentive check for \$30 was sent within one week of receipt of the completed questionnaire.

Special protocols, used as needed, consisted of:

- 1) An additional copy of the questionnaire was sent upon request to respondents reporting they'd not received it. USPS delays resulted in more such requests than usual.
- 2) Respondents expressing concerns were contacted either by Project Director Vicki Lein, or by Dr. Barry Radler, University of Wisconsin IOA.

Examples of mailed materials were delivered to MIDUS in pdf format.

Tracing and Locating

Sample without address information was pre-traced to find better address information. During pre-tracing, 3 sample members were identified as deceased, and 3 were identified as being away for the field period (imprisoned), and thus were excluded from the questionnaire mailing. Cases with no good address were flagged for 'address request letters', which were sent to a last known address. Of these, 10 were returned undeliverable and thus excluded from the questionnaire mailing. If the tracing mailing was returned with better address information, or were never returned marked 'undeliverable', the questionnaire mailing was sent.

If a questionnaire mailing was returned undeliverable, the case was sent to tracing. If tracing efforts resulted in a better address, the questionnaire was re-sent to the new address.

EFFORT REQUIRED

Over 13,524 items were mailed for the MIDUS ARTS study. This does not include duplicate mailings sent upon request, or the over 150 questionnaires re-sent to better addresses when they were returned undeliverable. See Table 2.

Table 2: MIDUS ARTS Mailings

Mailing Type	Number Sent
Address request letter	44
SAQ with pre-incentive	3831
Reminder postcard	3805
SAQ, second to non-responders	1925
SAQ, third to non-responders	1475
Thank you and SAQ post-incentive	2444
TOTAL Mailings*	13524

*Excludes duplicate mailings resent to the same respondent, for example, mailings re-sent if the first mailing was returned undeliverable and a new address was identified, or those re-sent to the same address upon request.

FINAL DATA DELIVERIES

Delivery of Contact Information

The MIDUS ARTS project was used to test the rolling delivery of respondent contact information to the MIDUS Core via a database 'handshake'. In the next round of MIDUS, to distribute cases eligible for fielding to other MIDUS projects that will be fielded concurrently (the daily diary, biomarker, and neuroscience projects), MIDUS Core staff will need key variables delivered from UWSC on a regular basis. These variables will be eligible for delivery via the handshake for each case once a final disposition code is applied and the last mailing sent.

UWSC worked with MIDUS Core to develop the 'MIDUS handshake' between the UWSC and MIDUS databases, and tested the process with the MIDUS ARTS project. Contact information, demographic variables, case disposition codes, and relevant field dates from the UWSC Project Operations Database (POD) were delivered to MIDUS via the handshake on a monthly basis. The first MIDUS ARTS handshake took place in May, 2021. The last handshake took place in October 2021. Changes to sample received after the last handshake were delivered via Excel spreadsheets, with the final update sent on February 9, 2022.

Delivery of Questionnaire Data

In October 2021, UWSC delivered final MIDUS ARTS data for 2,430 completed questionnaires. The delivery was comprised of a final cleaned data set, a data codebook, descriptive statistics, item notes describing non-standard response, and response to open-ended questions. In February 2022, UWSC delivered MIDUS ARTS data for 14 additional returns. This delivery was comprised of a cleaned data set, item notes describing non-standard response, and response to open-ended questions.

RESULTS

Out of the 3,847 members of the sample, 2,444 completed the MIDUS ARTS questionnaire. See final case disposition codes in Table 3.

Table 3: MIDUS ARTS SAQ Case Disposition Codes

Code	Code Text	Total
1100	Complete by October 2021	2430
2270	Complete by February 2022	14
2360	Refusal, withdrawal from study	3
2112	Refusal, respondent	10
2113	Refusal, returned blank	6
2260	Away for the field period	5
2310	Ineligible - deceased	30
2320	Ineligible – cognitively unable	1
3300	No good address	93
3190	Nothing returned	1255
Total		3847

MIDUS ARTS Questionnaire Response Rate

The AAPOR Response Rate calculation used was:

$$\frac{\text{Number of completed questionnaires}}{\text{Fielded sample – ineligible sample}}$$

For MIDUS ARTS, the response rate was calculated as:

$$\frac{(2430 + 14)}{(3847 - 31)} = \frac{2444}{3816} = 64\%$$

Respondents were deemed ineligible if respondent was deceased (30) or if respondent was deemed cognitively unable to participate (1). Respondents currently in jail were coded as 'Away for the field period', and while they were not necessarily sent the questionnaire, they were still part of eligible sample for calculating the response rate.