



## **README Data File Notes**

### **June 2011**

#### **Overview**

Almost all of the items in the MIDJA survey are taken directly from the MIDUS (Midlife in the US) II Project 1 phone interview and self-administered questionnaire (P1 SAQ), or the Project 4 self-administered questionnaire (P4 SAQ) (see [www.midus.wisc.edu](http://www.midus.wisc.edu)). When creating the MIDJA survey booklet, however, a number of items were changed to accommodate cultural differences (e.g. categories for educational attainment, health insurance, etc.). The MIDJA Survey also includes a few items that do not appear in MIDUS. The following provides information about these differences that analysts should be aware of prior to working with the data. Information about items that are not included in MIDUS is presented first, followed by information about differences between items appearing in both MIDJA and MIDUS.

Researchers interested in cross-cultural analyses may want to examine the following resources:

- MIDUS data and documentation are publicly available in the National Archive of Computerized Data on Aging (NACDA) at ICPSR (Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research):  
<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/NACDA/studies?archive=NACDA&q=MIDUS>
- The Guide to Merging MIDJA and MIDUS Data Files, included with the MIDJA documentation files.

#### **Variable Names**

MIDJA variable naming and coding conventions (See “Naming and Coding Conventions” in the general MIDJA documentation) specifies that the third character of the variable name be a letter that identifies the type, or name, of the instrument used to collect the data. The MIDJA Survey data as follows:

S = Self-Administered Questionnaire (SAQ)

#### **Questions & Variables Unique to MIDJA**

There are two types of unique items in the MIDJA Survey questionnaire (SAQ), those that are included to facilitate data collection and those that represent new culturally sensitive assessments. The text of these items appears in **violet** in the color coded version of the MIDJA Survey Questionnaire found in Appendix A of the Guide to Merging the MIDJA and MIDUS

Data. Similarly, these items are shaded in purple in the Roadmap file (MIDJA to MIDUS Roadmap).

Unique items were added to the SAQ to facilitate data collection for the following reasons.

Relevant items are specified:

1. Items were added to minimize confusion among respondents and facilitate data entry as follows:
  - a. Condition checklist (p. 4, A8 item 31): “None of the Above”,
  - b. Hospitalizations (p. 7 A14): “Have you been hospitalized overnight in the past 12 months?”
2. Items were added to be consistent with other similar items:
  - a. Seeing medical professionals (p. 7 A17a-e): Yes/No options were added to be consistent with medication use items (p. 5 A9a-l).
3. Items were added to facilitate accurate reporting and to provide culturally appropriate assessments.
  - a. Event Dates: Historically, the Japanese have dated events in Emperor Years (i.e. year of a given emperor’s reign). Use of the Western Common Era dates is becoming more common and people often use them interchangeably, however, many events are still strongly associated with Emperor Years rather than Common Era Years. To accommodate this, the items at “a” below include space to record the date in both Emperor Years and Common Era (i.e. western calendar).
    - i. Affected Items:
      1. Anesthesia needed (p. 6 A13), note includes month.
      2. Marriage (p. 33 L3)
      3. Parental Death (p. 44 P1c, P2c)
      4. Respondent birthdate (p. 45 Q2) – Note: the computed variable J1SQ2AGE (Respondent age at data collection) is included in the datafile rather than the birthdate.
    - ii. To facilitate analysis and cross-cultural comparisons, Emperor Years are converted to Common Era Years at data cleaning.
    - iii. *Only the Common Era Years are included in the public data file.*
  - b. Marriage and Family: divorce rates are relatively low and households are much more likely to include multiple generations in Japan, compared to the U.S., thus assessments of marital status and family members/household are much shorter and include the following unique items:
    - i. Number of years (ever) married (p. 33 L2)
    - ii. Any family members not living with you? (p. 40 N1)
    - iii. Number of people in your family (p. 45 Q5)
  - c. A new assessment of wellbeing developed by Japanese researchers was added. See the MIDJA Documentation of Scales and Constructed Variables for additional information.

- i. Minimalist WellBeing Scale (p.31 J8qq-zz)  
Kan, C., Karasawa, M., & Kitayama, S. (2009). Minimalist in style: Self, identity and well-being in Japan. *Self and Identity*, 8, 300-317.

### **Question and Response Text Modifications in MIDJA**

In response to cultural differences between Japan and the U.S.. two types of changes were made to response and question text. In some instances changes were made to response options, while in other instances a series of items were modified. Specific details about these changes and the items affected are provided below.

#### **Changes to Response Options**

Two types of changes were made to response options. For some question sets the order of the response options was reversed to accommodate differences in how items are read (e.g. the response set “all of the time, most of the time, sometimes, rarely, never” was flipped to “never, rarely, sometimes, all of the time, most of the time). For other questions the text of the response set was changed to more culturally appropriate options (e.g. religious preference). These changes were made as follows to the indicated items.

#### **Response Options Reversed**

The following identifies response sets that are reversed in MIDJA (compared to MIDUS) and the set of items affected. The order of the response options corresponds to their order in the MIDJA SAQ (in MIDUS the options appear in the reverse order). The text of the affected response options appears in **red** in the color coded version of the MIDJA Survey Questionnaire found in Appendix A of the Guide to Merging the MIDJA and MIDUS Data.

1. **No (=1), Yes (=2)**; the affected items are:
  - a. “Do you get short of breath in the following situations?” (p. 6 A11a-d)
  - b. “Please indicate whether the following problems have happened to anyone in your whole family in the past 12 months.” (p. 45-46 Q6a-j)
2. **Not at all, A Little, Some, A lot**; the affected items are:
  - a. “How much does your health limit you in each of the following?” (p. 6 A10a-j)
  - b. “To what extent do the following statements describe the way you feel about your current job?” (p. 17 E18a-f)
  - c. “The following statements are designed to help us understand how you approach managing your life. Please indicate how well the following statements describe you.” (p. 21 G3a-t)
  - d. “Please indicate how well each of the following describes you.” (p. 24 G6a-ee)
  - e. “To what extent do each of the following statements describe you?” (p. 26 H1a-f)
  - f. “The next several questions are about your friends. Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how much for each of these items.*” (p. 32 K3a-d)
  - g. “The next several questions are about your specific relationships you’re your friends. Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how much for each of these items.*” (p. 33 K4a-d)

- h. “The next several questions are about your spouse/partner with your friends. Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how much for each of these items.*” (p. 35 L13a-f)
  - i. “Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how much for each of these items.*” (p. 36 L15a-f)
  - j. “The next several questions are about your family. Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how much for each of these items.*” (p. 41 N3a-f)
  - k. “Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how much for each of these items.*” (p. 41 N4e,f)
3. ***Never, A little, Some, Often, A lot***; the affected items are:
- a. “Please indicate how often you used each of the following therapies in the past 12 months, either to treat a physical health problem, to treat an emotional or personal problem, to maintain or enhance your wellness, or to prevent the onset of illness?” (p. 7 A18a-f)
4. ***None of the time, A little of the time, Some of the time, Most of the time, all the time***; the affected items are:
- a. “During the past 30 days, how much of the time did you feel...” (p. 10 D1a-n, D2a-m)
5. ***Disagree (Strongly, Some, A little), Neutral, Agree (Strongly, Some, A little)***; the affected items are:
- a. “The next set of questions deal with your views of yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.” (p. 19-20 G1a-s)
  - b. “The next set of questions asks about your outlook on life. Answer according to your own feelings rather than how you think ‘most people’ would answer.” (p. 20 G2a-f)
  - c. “How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements.” (p. 38 L22a-d)
6. ***Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Often***; the affected items are:
- a. “The next several questions are about your friends. Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how often for each of these items.*” (p. 32 K3e-h)
  - b. “The next several questions are about your specific relationships you’re your friends. Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how much for each of these items.*” (p. 33 K4e-h)
  - c. “The next several questions are about your spouse/partner. Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how often for each of these items.*” (p. 36 L14a-f)
  - d. “Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how often for each of these items.*” (p. 37 L16a-f)
    - i. Note: in MIDUS P4 these items have the same response set (Not at all, A little, Some, A lot) at items L15a-f.
  - e. “Please circle the appropriate number for each item. *Answer how often for each of these items.*” (p. 42 N4a-d, g-j)

7. *Not likely at all, Not very likely, Somewhat likely, Very likely*; the affected items are:
- “It is always difficult to predict what will happen in a relationship, but realistically, what do you think the chances are that you and your partner will eventually separate.” (p. 35 L10)

#### Item/Response Text Changed

The following identifies response sets for which minor changes were made to response and/or item text to be more culturally appropriate or to make English and Japanese text more consistent. For example there are a few instances where the Japanese text included numbers (e.g. 2-3) where the English included text (e.g. a few). In these instances “several” was changed to “2-3”. The affected items appear in green in the color coded version of the MIDJA Survey Questionnaire found in Appendix A of the Guide to Merging the MIDJA and MIDUS Data.

- The following identifies items where text of response options was modified to maintain consistency with the Japanese text. The modified text is listed along with the affected items.
  - Strongly, Some, A little***, changed from Strongly, Somewhat, A little. (p. 22-23 G4a-p, p.23 G5j, p. 25 G7a-s)
  - Disagree (Strongly, Some, A little) Agree(Strongly, Some, A little)***, changed from Disagree Strongly, Disagree, Disagree Slightly, Agree Slightly, Agree, Agree Strongly. (p.28 J7a-h)
  - Worst, Best***, changed from None, Very Much. (p. 34 L7, L8)
  - Hours per day***, changed from hours per week. (p. 37 L18, L19)
- The following identifies instances where item or response text was modified to be more culturally appropriate.
  - Climbing 2-3 flights of stairs, Walking 2000 meters or more, Walking 200-300 meters, Walking 50 meters***, changed from Climbing several flights of stairs, Walking more than a mile, walking several blocks, walking one block. (p. 6 A10c, f, g, h)
  - To accommodate differences in the education system between the two countries, responses options for educational attainment were reduced from 12 categories in MIDUS to 8 categories in MIDJA (p.45 Q3) as follows:
    - The MIDUS categories are:*** No School/Some grade school, Eighth grade/Junior High School, Some High School, GED, Graduated from High School, 1 to 2 years of College (No degree yet), 3 or more years of college (No degree yet), Graduated from a two-year college or vocational school or associate’s degree, Graduated from a four- or five-year college or Bachelor’s degree, Some graduate school, Master’s degree, Ph.D. etc. (Ed.D, MD, DDS, LLB, LLD, JD or other professional degree).
    - The MIDJA categories are :*** 8th Grade/Junior high school graduate, Some high school, High school graduate, Vocational school graduate, 2 year college graduate, Some College Graduated from 4 or 6 year college, or Bachelors degree, Some graduate school, Masters degree or Ph.D.

### Responses Reversed and Item/Response Text Changed

The following identifies response sets to which both of the above apply. That is response text was reversed and minor changes were made to response and/or item text as described to be more culturally appropriate or to make English and Japanese text more consistent. For affected items, reversed response options appear in **red** and modified item/response text appear in **green** in the color coded version of the MIDJA Survey Questionnaire found in Appendix A of the Guide to Merging the MIDJA and MIDUS Data.

1. The following identifies items where text of response options was modified to maintain consistency with the Japanese text and response options were reversed. The modified text is listed along with the affected items.
  - a. “During the past 30 days, how often have you experienced each of the following”. (p. 4 A7a-i):
    - i. Responses Reversed - ***Not at all, Once a month, 2-3 times a month, Once a week, 2-3 times a week, Almost every day***
    - ii. Modified options - ***2-3 times a month & 2-3 times a day***, changed from several times a month and several times a day
  - b. “During the past 30 days have you taken prescription medicine for any of the following.” (p. 5 A9a-l):
    - i. Responses Reversed – ***Once a month, 2-3 times a month, once a week, 2-3 times a week, daily***
    - ii. Modified options - ***2-3 times a month & 2-3 times a day***, changed from a few times a month and few times a day
  - c. “The next questions are about how your job may affect your family and personal lie, and how your family and personal life may affect your job. How often have you experience each of the following in the past year.”, (p. 15 E14a-p); “Please indicate how often each of the following is true of your job.”, (p. 16 E15a-k); “In the past year, how often has each of the following occurred at your job?”, (E16a-d); “Please indicate how often each of the following is true of your job.”, (p. 17 E17a-e):
    - i. Reversed options – ***None of the time, A little of the time, Some of the time, Most of the time, All the time***
    - ii. Modified options -***None of the Time, A little of the time***, changed from Never, Rarely
  - d. “The following questions are about the ways you generally interact with others, including your sense of obligation towards others. Please circle the number that corresponds to how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.”, (p. 23 G4q-v); “The next set of items explore your well-being. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.”, (p. 29-31 J8a-pp):
    - i. Reversed options – ***Disagree, Agree***.
    - ii. Modified options – ***Some*** changed from Somewhat

### **Changes to Multiple (Non-Scale) Items**

The modifications described above are minor however there are a few sets of items that required more substantial changes to accommodate differences in cultural norms and social structure. The following sections are substantially changes different from corresponding sections in the MIDUS instruments:

1. Health Insurance (p. 8 A19, A20): The MIDJA Survey includes 2 questions about health insurance (source of insurance, enrolled in any private insurance), while MIDUS includes 12 questions, some of which have multiple items. The reason for this is that structure of the health insurance system in Japan is different from the health insurance system in the U.S.. Residents of Japan are required to enroll in one of Japan's 8 health insurance systems, while the U.S. is attempting to implement such requirements.
2. Work (p. 13 E2-6): The MIDJA Survey includes 6 questions about work that focus on the participant's current work situation (including type of work, details about job content, company size, and whether or not participant is in a management position), while MIDUS includes 18 questions that also assess reasons for layoff, duration of layoff etc.. The reasons for this difference are cultural norms of relatively long tenure and low rates of job turnover and associated differences in standard survey methods for assessing work.
3. Religion (p.43 O1, 2a-c, 3a-c): The MIDJA survey includes 3 questions about religion and spirituality (preference, importance of religion/spirituality, practice) while MIDUS includes 11 questions, some of which have multiple items. These items are conceptually similar, but the specific content is different due to cultural differences in predominant religious preferences.
4. Family Events (p. 45-46 Qa-j): The MIDJA survey includes a 10 item Yes/No checklist assessing problems (physical health, mental health, financial, work, legal etc.) that may have happened to anyone in the respondent's family in the past 12 months. The same checklist appears in MIDUS, but respondents with 3 Yes/No columns so respondents can specify who (i.e. spouse/partner, respondent's parents, respondent's children). This change was made to create a format that was more accessible to Japanese participants.