

ICPSR 25281

**Midlife in the United States
(MIDUS 2): Cognitive Project,
2004-2006**

Carol D. Ryff
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Margie E. Lachman
Brandeis University

Data File Notes

Inter-university Consortium for
Political and Social Research
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106
www.icpsr.umich.edu

Terms of Use

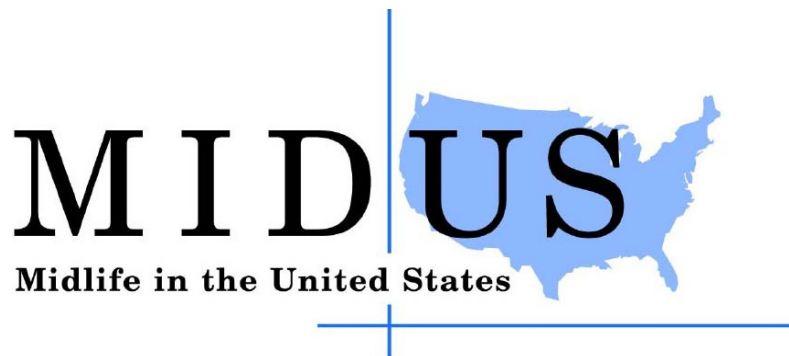
The terms of use for this study can be found at:

<http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/cocoon/ICPSR/TERMS/25281.xml>

MIDUS II PROJECT 3: Data File Notes
Cognitive Test Battery

Brief Test of Adult Cognition by Telephone (BTACT)
and Stop & Go Switch Task (SGST)

Margie E. Lachman, Project Leader
Patricia A. Tun, Co-Investigator
Chandra L. Murphy, Research Assistant



Brief Test of Adult Cognition by Telephone (BTACT)

The BTACT includes 6 subtests that provide an index of cognitive function in domains of key importance in cognitive aging. The basic BTACT subtests give accuracy measures. An additional Stop and Go Switch Task yields both accuracy and latency measures. The cognitive battery was developed, processed, and scored by Project 3 and the entire battery was administered in a telephone interview after completion of Project 1. The data are labeled with Project 3 (“B3”).

For more information about the BTACT instrument see:

- Lifespan Lab Website: <http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/lifespan/btact.html>
- Recent references:

Lachman, M. E., & Tun, P. A. (2008). Cognitive testing in large scale surveys.

Assessment by telephone. In S. Hofer & D. Alwin (Eds.), *Handbook of cognitive aging: Interdisciplinary perspective* (pp. 506–522). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lachman, M. E., Tun, P. A., Murphy, C. L., & Agrigoroaei, S. (2009). Cognition in Midlife: Findings from the Brief Test of Adult Cognition by Telephone (BTACT) with the MIDUS National Sample. Working Paper, Brandeis University, Waltham, MA.

[<http://www.brandeis.edu/projects/lifespan/btact.html>]

Tun, P. A., & Lachman, M. E. (2006). Telephone assessment of cognitive function in adulthood: The Brief Test of Adult Cognition by Telephone (BTACT). *Age and Ageing*, 35, 629–633.

Tun, P. A., & Lachman, M. E. (2008). Age differences in reaction time and attention in a national telephone sample of adults: Education, sex, and task complexity matter. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(5), 1421-1429.

BTACT Subtests:

1. Immediate word list recall (tests episodic verbal memory)

Although participants hear only 15 words, the data fields for the immediate and delayed word recall tests each include 26 variables to allow for 15 list words and up to 11 possible repetitions (reporting a list item more than once) and intrusions (reporting non-list items). We use '90' as a code for intrusions (a measure of interest) to distinguish these from inapplicable responses. We measure total number of unique responses up to 15 (B3TWLITU), as well as total number of repetitions (B3TWLITR) and intrusions (B3TWLITI).

2. Digits backward span (tests working memory)

The measure is the highest number of digits recalled up to 8 (B3TDBS).

3. Category fluency (tests verbal ability and speed)

The primary measure of interest is total number of unique responses (B3TCTFLU). We do not recommend the use of the measures of repetitions (reporting a category member more than once) (B3TCTFLR) and intrusions (non-category items) (B3TCTFLI), as the reliability is still being checked.

4. **Number series** (tests fluid intelligence/ reasoning)

We give the actual number reported for each of the 5 items, the accuracy of each response, as well as total correct (B3TNSTOT).

5. **Backward counting** (tests speed of processing)

The primary measure of interest is the number of items correctly reported (B3TBKTOT). This is derived from the last number reached (B3BKCT), taking off points for errors (numbers omitted or reported erroneously, out of the correct sequence) (B3BKERR). The total correct is calculated as $(100 - (B3BKCT + B3BKERR))$.

6. **Delayed word list recall** (episodic verbal memory/forgetting)

As with immediate recall there are 26 fields to allow for repetitions and intrusions. Measures of interest are total number of unique items recalled up to 15 (B3TWLDTU), as well as repetitions (B3TWLDTR) and intrusions (B3TWLDTI).

Composites:

1. **Forgetting**

We provide a measure of forgetting (B3TWLFF) calculated as the proportion forgotten between immediate and delayed word list recall $[(\text{Word List Immediate: Tot Unique Items} - \text{Word List Delayed: Tot Unique Item}) / \text{Word List Immediate: Tot Unique Items}]$
 $= [(B3TWLITU - B3TWLDTU) / B3TWLITU]$.

2. **BTACT Composite**

We provide a composite measure (B3TCOMP) that is calculated as the mean of z-scores for five subtests: word list recall (sum of immediate and delayed tests), digits backward, category fluency, number series, and backward counting. Composites were calculated only for complete cases with scores on all tests. We standardized the composite to a z-score, with a mean of zero and standard deviation of one. The composite has shown good internal consistency with an alpha of .712.

3. Factor Scores: Episodic Memory & Executive Functioning

We conducted exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis of the BTACT including latencies from the Stop & Go Tasks' switch and nonswitch trials. We included the measures from the above mentioned "BTACT Composite" (Word List Immediate, Digits Backward, Category Fluency, Number Series, Backward Counting, and Word List Delayed) as well as the mean of switch and non switch trial latencies (multiplied by -1 to ensure higher scores indicated faster response times). A principal axis factor analysis with oblique rotation yielded two factors with eigenvalues greater than one. We also found a good fit for the two factor model using confirmatory factor analysis. The first factor represented Episodic Memory (B3TEM) and was comprised of Word List Immediate and Word List Delayed. The second factor, Executive Functioning (B3TEF), was made up of the remaining variables. Each factor was computed as a mean of the z-scores for the respective tests. The two factor means were also standardized to z-scores, with a mean of zero and a standard deviation of one. Because the Executive Functioning factor includes a variable from the Stop & Go Switch Task, see the note concerning filter use at the end of this document.

Stop & Go Switch Task (SGST)

The Stop & Go Switch Task is a dual executive-function test that was administered as part of the MIDUS II telephone cognitive battery to assess important control functions including task-switching and inhibitory control. It provides both accuracy and latency measures. The test includes 2 single-task blocks and a mixed-task block that required alternating between 2 tasks. In the single-task blocks participants give a vocal response as quickly as possible to the stimulus words “RED” and “GREEN”; the first block follows a “NORMAL” (congruent) response rule (say "STOP" to "RED", and "GO" to "GREEN"), then the second block follows a “REVERSE” (incongruent) response rule (say "GO" to RED", and "STOP" to "GREEN"). In the mixed-task block the cues “NORMAL” and “REVERSE” are given at unpredictable intervals, requiring the participant to switch between the congruent and incongruent response rules. Task-switching ability is reflected by the difference between performance on nonswitch trials and switch trials. Inhibitory control function is reflected by poorer performance on incongruent trials as compared to congruent trials.

1. TRIAL TYPES

This speeded task produces accuracy and latencies (in seconds) for 3 blocks of trials:

- A. A *congruent* ("NORMAL") *single-task* measure (20 trials) in which the participant is expected to respond "STOP" to stimulus "RED", and "GO" to stimulus "GREEN".

- B. An *incongruent* ("REVERSE") *single-task* measure (20 trials) in which the participant is expected to respond "GO" to stimulus "RED", and "STOP" to stimulus "GREEN".
- C. A *mixed-task* that alternates between normal and reverse responses rules, depending on cue "NORMAL" or "REVERSE". Cue changes occur at random intervals after runs of 2, 3, 4, 5, or 6 trials of the same type. The first trial after a cue change is designated as a SWITCH trial. Subsequent trials in the run that do not involve a cue change are designated as NONSWITCH trials. There are 32 trials; however, trials 1-3 are considered a warm-up prior to the first switch and are not included in summary statistics.

2. INDIVIDUAL TRIALS:

Raw scores for individual trials encode both accuracy and latency in seconds (to 3 decimal places). An incorrect trial (a “wrong answer”) is coded as ‘95’, and is not included in latency composites. An invalid trial is coded as ‘99’ (e.g. participant is distracted, or makes responses other than “stop” or “go”).

3. COMPOSITE SCORES

Summary statistics include the following:

- A. **Accuracy:** percent correct aggregated over conditions.
- B. **Latency:** median reaction time, in seconds, for correct trials aggregated over conditions. We have chosen to use medians to avoid right-skewing of means with long response times.

C. **Costs:** we provide two measures of switch cost that give an estimate of the difference in performance on trials that require switching response rule and trials that do not require a switch. (1) General switch costs compare latencies on mixed-task trials to single-task trials. (2) Local switch costs compare mixed-task switch trials to mixed-task nonswitch trials. For both general and local switch costs, *absolute* costs represent a simple difference score between the easier and more difficult condition (e.g. $A - B$). *Relative* costs give the proportional decline in performance from the easier to the harder condition, and thus control for differences in baseline performance (e.g. $(A-B)/A$).

4. FILTERS for Stop & Go Switch Task

We provide two levels of filters. Researchers who wish to use all valid files can choose to select the Valid filter (i.e. cases in which there were no technical malfunctions, the participant understood the task and was not distracted by external events). The descriptive data for the SGST in the codebook were calculated using this ‘Valid’ filter. In our analyses, in addition to using only valid cases we have used a criterion of 75% accuracy in each condition to ensure that participants were performing the task correctly; researchers who wish to use this approach can select cases based on the ‘Clean’ filter. Note that the BTACT Executive Functioning Factor is computed using a variable from the SGST, and therefore the ‘Clean’ filter should be applied when using this factor.