

National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey

August 2021-August 2023 Data Documentation, Codebook, and Frequencies

Alcohol Use (ALQ_L)

Data File: ALQ_L.xpt

First Published: September 2024

Last Revised: NA

Component Description

The alcohol use questionnaire (variable name prefix ALQ_L) file provides data on lifetime and current use (i.e., past 12 months, past 30 days). Questions are not specific to the type of alcohol used.

Eligible Sample

All participants ages 12 years and older in the August 2021-August 2023 sample were eligible; however, only data from participants who were ages 18 and over are included in this file.

A special use data file for participants ages 12-17, ALQY_L_R, is available through the [NCHS Research Data Center \(RDC\)](#).

Interview Setting and Mode of Administration

The ALQ section was administered at the Mobile Examination Center (MEC) during the MEC Interview, including a question on binge drinking frequency in the past 30 days (i.e., ALQ170), which was previously asked at the end of the in-person dietary interview in the MEC. For adults 18 years and older, questions were self-administered using the Audio-Computer Assisted Self-Interview (ACASI) system. The ACASI enables participants to hear questions through headphones as well as read questions on the computer screen. Participants move at their own speed and touch the screen to indicate their response. For adolescents 12 to 17 whose data are available via the NCHS RDC, questions were also self-administered using the ACASI system.

The NHANES [August 2021-August 2023](#) ALQ is available on the NHANES website.

Quality Assurance & Quality Control

The ACASI system is programmed with built-in consistency checks to reduce data entry errors. ACASI also uses online help screens to assist participants in defining key terms used in the questionnaire.

For details on the QA/QC process for this component, please refer to the August 2021-August 2023 [MEC ACASI Procedures Manual](#) on the [NHANES website](#).

Data Processing and Editing

The data were edited for completeness, consistency, and illogical values. Because the data are based on self-reports, not all inconsistencies could be resolved. It is recommended that analysts review the data carefully prior to analysis.

Analytic Notes

The NHANES alcohol use questions for adults were not changed between the 2017-March 2020 and August 2021-August 2023 data collection cycles. However, question ALQ290 (i.e., "During the past 12 months, about how often did {you/SP} have 12 or more drinks in a single day?") was removed from the August 2021-August 2023 questionnaire.

The NHANES August 2021-August 2023 alcohol use data were collected in the MEC; therefore, exam sample weights should be used for the analyses. Please refer to the [NHANES Analytic Guidelines](#) and the on-line [NHANES Tutorial](#) for details on the use of sample weights and other analytic issues.

Codebook and Frequencies

SEQN - Respondent sequence number

Variable Name:	SEQN
SAS Label:	Respondent sequence number
English Text:	Respondent sequence number.
Target:	Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

ALQ111 - Ever had a drink of any kind of alcohol

Variable Name: ALQ111

SAS Label: Ever had a drink of any kind of alcohol

English Text: In your entire life, have you had at least 1 drink of any kind of alcohol, not counting small tastes or sips? By a drink, I mean a 12 oz. beer, a 5 oz. glass of wine, or one and a half ounces of liquor.

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
1	Yes	4918	4918	
2	No	558	5476	End of Section
7	Refused	0	5476	
9	Don't know	5	5481	
.	Missing	856	6337	

ALQ121 - Past 12 mos how often drink alc bev

Variable Name: ALQ121

SAS Label: Past 12 mos how often drink alc bev

English Text: During the past 12 months, about how often did you drink any type of alcoholic beverage? PROBE: In other words, how many days per week, per month, or per year did you drink?

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
0	Never in the last year	836	836	ALQ151
1	Every day	163	999	
2	Nearly every day	301	1300	
3	3 to 4 times a week	458	1758	
4	2 times a week	483	2241	
5	Once a week	420	2661	
6	2 to 3 times a month	574	3235	
7	Once a month	362	3597	
8	7 to 11 times in the last year	261	3858	
9	3 to 6 times in the last year	517	4375	
10	1 to 2 times in the last year	542	4917	
77	Refused	2	4919	
99	Don't know	3	4922	
.	Missing	1415	6337	

ALQ130 - Avg # alcoholic drinks/day/past 12 mos

Variable Name: ALQ130

SAS Label: Avg # alcoholic drinks/day/past 12 mos

English Text: During the past 12 months, on those days that you drank alcoholic beverages, on average, how many drinks did you have? (By a drink, I mean a 12 oz. beer, a 5 oz. glass of wine, or one and a half ounces of liquor.)

English Instructions: HAND CARD ALQ1 IF LESS THAN 1 DRINK, ENTER '1'. IF 95 DRINKS OR MORE, ENTER '95'. CAPI INSTRUCTION: SOFT EDIT: IF RESPONSE ≥ 20 , THEN DISPLAY "YOU SAID ON THE DAYS THAT YOU DRINK YOU HAVE ON AVERAGE {DISPLAY QUANTITY} DRINKS, IS THAT CORRECT?" HARD EDIT: Range - 1-95 ENTER # OF DRINKS

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Hard Edits: 1 to 14

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
1 to 14	Range of Values	4035	4035	
15	15 drinks or more	20	4055	
777	Refused	4	4059	
999	Don't know	10	4069	
.	Missing	2268	6337	

ALQ142 - # days have 4/5 drinks/past 12 mos

Variable Name: ALQ142

SAS Label: # days have 4/5 drinks/past 12 mos

English Text: During the past 12 months, about how often did you have {DISPLAY NUMBER} or more drinks of any alcoholic beverage? PROBE: In other words, how many days per week, per month, or per year did you have {DISPLAY NUMBER} or more drinks in a single day?

English Instructions: HAND CARD ALQ2 INTERVIEWER INSTRUCTION: IF SP ANSWERS NONE, PLEASE CODE '0', NEVER IN THE LAST YEAR. CAPI INSTRUCTION: IF SP = MALE, DISPLAY = 5 IF SP = FEMALE, DISPLAY = 4 HARD EDIT: ALQ142 CANNOT HAVE A LOWER CODED VALUE THAN ALQ121, UNLESS ALQ142 IS CODED '0'. ERROR MESSAGE: "SP HAS REPORTED DRINKING MORE TIMES IN THIS QUESTION THAN WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED IN ALQ121."

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
0	Never in the last year	1709	1709	ALQ151
1	Every day	39	1748	
2	Nearly every day	63	1811	
3	3 to 4 times a week	122	1933	
4	2 times a week	114	2047	
5	Once a week	207	2254	
6	2 to 3 times a month	249	2503	
7	Once a month	290	2793	
8	7 to 11 times in the last year	142	2935	
9	3 to 6 times in the last year	398	3333	
10	1 to 2 times in the last year	729	4062	
77	Refused	8	4070	
99	Don't know	12	4082	
.	Missing	2255	6337	

ALQ270 - # times 4/5 drinks in 2hrs/past 12 mos

Variable Name: ALQ270

SAS Label: # times 4/5 drinks in 2hrs/past 12 mos

English Text: During the past 12 months, about how often did you have {DISPLAY NUMBER} or more drinks in a period of two hours or less?

English Instructions: HAND CARD ALQ2 CAPI INSTRUCTION: IF SP = MALE, DISPLAY = 5 IF SP= FEMALE, DISPLAY = 4 HARD EDIT: ALQ270 CANNOT HAVE A LOWER CODED VALUE THAN ALQ121, UNLESS ALQ.270 IS CODED '0'. ERROR MESSAGE: "SP HAS REPORTED DRINKING MORE TIMES IN THIS QUESTION THAN WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED IN ALQ121."

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
0	Never in the last year	1020	1020	
1	Every day	12	1032	
2	Nearly every day	34	1066	
3	3 to 4 times a week	57	1123	
4	2 times a week	71	1194	
5	Once a week	99	1293	
6	2 to 3 times a month	128	1421	
7	Once a month	183	1604	
8	7 to 11 times in the last year	79	1683	
9	3 to 6 times in the last year	163	1846	
10	1 to 2 times in the last year	507	2353	
77	Refused	4	2357	
99	Don't know	9	2366	
.	Missing	3971	6337	

ALQ280 - # times 8+ drinks in 1 day/past 12 mos

Variable Name: ALQ280

SAS Label: # times 8+ drinks in 1 day/past 12 mos

English Text: During the past 12 months, about how often did you have 8 or more drinks in a single day?

English Instructions: HAND CARD ALQ2 HARD EDIT: ALQ280 CANNOT HAVE A LOWER CODED VALUE THAN ALQ121, UNLESS ALQ.280 IS CODED '0'.
ERROR MESSAGE: "SP HAS REPORTED DRINKING MORE TIMES IN THIS QUESTION THAN WAS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED IN ALQ121."

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
0	Never in the last year	1391	1391	ALQ151
1	Every day	12	1403	
2	Nearly every day	21	1424	
3	3 to 4 times a week	36	1460	
4	2 times a week	49	1509	
5	Once a week	74	1583	
6	2 to 3 times a month	82	1665	
7	Once a month	122	1787	
8	7 to 11 times in the last year	80	1867	
9	3 to 6 times in the last year	114	1981	
10	1 to 2 times in the last year	371	2352	
77	Refused	3	2355	
99	Don't know	7	2362	
.	Missing	3975	6337	

ALQ151 - Ever have 4/5 or more drinks every day

Variable Name: ALQ151

SAS Label: Ever have 4/5 or more drinks every day

English Text: Was there ever a time or times in your life when you drank {DISPLAY NUMBER} or more drinks of any kind of alcoholic beverage almost every day?

English Instructions: CAPI INSTRUCTION: IF SP = MALE, DISPLAY = 5 IF SP = FEMALE, DISPLAY = 4

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
1	Yes	916	916	
2	No	3979	4895	
7	Refused	1	4896	
9	Don't know	5	4901	
.	Missing	1436	6337	

ALQ170 - # times 4/5 drinks on occasion/past mo

Variable Name: ALQ170

SAS Label: # times 4/5 drinks on occasion/past mo

English Text: Considering all types of alcoholic beverages, during the past 30 days, how many times did you have {DISPLAY NUMBER} or more drinks on an occasion?

Target: Both males and females 18 YEARS - 150 YEARS

Hard Edits: 0 to 20

Code or Value	Value Description	Count	Cumulative	Skip to Item
0 to 20	Range of Values	2309	2309	
30	More than 20 times	43	2352	
777	Refused	3	2355	
999	Don't know	3	2358	
.	Missing	3979	6337	