

ICPSR 26841

**Midlife in the United States  
(MIDUS 2): Daily Stress  
Project, 2004-2009**

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Study Description

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## MIDUS Project 2:

# National Study of *Daily Experiences*

## Wave 2: Study Description

For file: M2\_P2\_Daily Data\_7-14-09.sav

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## **National Study of Daily Experiences**

### **Wave 2: Study Description**

#### **Specific Aims**

The National Study of Daily Experiences (NSDE) is one of the in-depth studies that are part of the MacArthur Foundation National Survey of Midlife in the United States (MIDUS). The purpose of the NSDE is to examine the day-to-day lives, particularly the daily stressful experiences, of a subsample of MIDUS respondents. Although previous daily diary research has advanced our understanding of daily stress processes, there are important limitations in these studies that will be addressed in the NSDE. First, previous studies in this area have relied on small and often unrepresentative samples that limit the generalizability of findings. For this reason, the NSDE uses a large national sample of adults in the United States. Second, previous studies of individual differences in exposure and reactivity to daily events typically have examined only one source of variability, such as personality, to the exclusion of others. The NSDE corrects this problem by utilizing the data collected in the larger MIDUS survey on a wide array of sociodemographic and psychosocial variables to study the determinants of exposure and reactivity to daily stress. Third, previous studies have failed to investigate the role of genetics in both exposure and reactivity to daily stressors. The aims of the second wave of the NSDE are:

- (1) To describe how the links between multiple aspects of daily stressors (e.g., frequency, content, severity) and daily physical and emotional well-being change over 10 years during adulthood;
- (2) To examine how personal factors, including socio-demographic factors and personality characteristics, influence change in both exposure, as well as changes in physical and emotional reactivity, to daily stressors;
- (3) To investigate how exposure and reactivity to daily stressors correlate with physiological indicators of physical health and predict changes in global health reports; and
- (4) To explore the relative genetic and environmental influences mediating change in exposure and physical and emotional reactivity to daily stressors throughout adulthood.

#### **Sample and Procedure**

These aims will be addressed by analyzing the second wave of the National Study of Daily Experiences (NSDE II). The first wave of NSDE (NSDE I) consisted of an 8-day telephone diary study of 1,483 adults ranging in age from 25-74 years. This 1996 U.S. national sample is comprised of 10,389 daily interviews. NSDE II repeats the 8-day protocol with the addition of multiple assessments of daily cortisol (4 occasions  $\times$  4

days). NSDE II respondents are a representative sub-sample of the two-wave MIDUS survey that has completed both the phone interview and self-administered questionnaires. The twins were selected if twin pairs had high self-reported certainty of zygoty, completed the MIDUS interview and questionnaires, and mailed in their cheek cell samples. Among the 2,022 participants, the sample is comprised of 1141 random digit dialed respondents (RDD), 516 twins, 185 siblings, and 180 Milwaukee. Approximately 69% of the respondents have completed all eight interview days, 88% completed at least seven interview days, and 94% completed at least six interview days. In total, the data set is comprised of 14,912 days out of a possible 16176 ( $N=2,022 * 8$  days) yielding a retention rate of 92%.

In the second wave of NSDE, participants completed short telephone interviews about their daily experiences across eight consecutive days. On the final interview day, participants answered several questions about their previous week. Data collection is spread throughout the year, allowing for the examination of seasonal variation in daily experiences. Data collection consists of separate "flights" of interviews with each flight representing the eight-day sequence of interviews from approximately 20 respondents. The entire interview was CATI programmed, which enabled us to incorporate skip patterns and open-ended probe questions as well as to keypunch data during the interview. This has allowed us to clean data throughout data collection. To boost the response and retention rates, several strategies have been implemented. For example, approximately one week prior to contact, respondents in the NSDE are sent a check for \$25 along with a recruitment letter explaining the study and when we would be calling them. We also set up a toll free 800 number that respondents could call to set up or change appointments.

### **Measures**

A wide range of information was obtained using the daily telephone interview. A detailed codebook of all of the items in the telephone interview along with a coding manual for the open ended responses also is available. Following is a brief outline of the types of information we obtained.

#### ***Introduction Section: Descriptive Information about the Respondent and the Day of the Interview***

The beginning of the interview consists of demographic information about the respondent and characteristics about the day of the interview (e.g., study day, day of week). This information determines the question time frame for the rest of the interview. For example on the first day of interviewing, the time frame for the questions refers to the past 24 hours ("since this time yesterday"). On subsequent days, the time frame is "since we spoke yesterday". This helps prevent overlapping information across the days of interviewing.

### ***Section A: Time Use, Giving, and Volunteering***

Questions B2DAW1CH to B2DAC4M ask how much time respondents spent in various activities in the past 24 hours. In addition to questions that ask about time spent taking care of children, doing chores, working, watching television, participating in leisure activities, and engaging in physical activities, respondents also are asked about time spent giving and receiving formal and informal practical support, financial contributions, and emotional support. In the second wave of NSDE, questions pertained to time spent sleeping and time spent providing assistance to someone with a disability or health problem were added.

### ***Section B: Physical Health Symptoms and Cigarette and Alcohol Usage***

Questions B2DB1A to B2DB1LEG ask whether respondents experienced specific symptoms that day (e.g., since they woke up in the morning). B2DB1A2 to B2DB1LE2 ask respondents about the severity of the specific symptoms experienced that day. In the second wave of NSDE, skin related symptoms, eye related symptoms, ear related symptoms, and teeth related symptoms were added.

B2DB2 and B2DB3 ask about the quantity of cigarette and alcohol usage in the past 24 hours.

### ***Section C: Non-Specific Psychological Distress and Positive Affect***

Questions B2DC1 to B2DC27 are similar to the negative and positive affect items asked in the first wave of NSDE but with a different daily time frame (e.g., since respondents woke up in the morning). Participants were asked to rate the intensity of negative and positive affect on a scale of 0 to 4, where 0 = none of the time and 4 = all of the time. (Items B2DC13, B2DC14, B2DC15, B2DC16, B2DC17, B2DC18, B2DC19, B2DC20, B2Dc21, B2Dc22, B2Dc23, B2Dc24, B2Dc25, B2Dc26, and B2Dc27 were added in the second wave of NSDE.

### ***Section D: Work Productivity and Cutbacks***

Work productivity and cutbacks were assessed with variables B2DD1 to B2DD4. Respondents indicated the extent and reasons why they cut back any normal work activities, the time spent with others, and on normal activities.

### ***Section F: Daily Inventory of Stressful Experiences (DISE)***

The DISE is a semi-structured instrument that assesses a wide array of daily stressful experiences. The inventory consists of a series of stem questions asking whether certain types of events had occurred in the past 24 hours along with a set of guidelines for probing affirmative responses. The aim of the interviewing technique is to acquire a short narrative of each event that includes descriptive information (e.g., duration, timing, and overlap with other events) as well as what was at stake for the respondent. All of the

interviews are tape-recorded, transcribed, and coded for several characteristics including: (a) specific classification (e.g., work overload, argument with spouse, traffic problem); (b) who was involved in event; and (c) severity of stress. See the Daily Inventory of Stressful Events (DISE) Interviewer and Expert Coding manuals for more information.

### ***Positive Events***

To examine the positive events in respondents' daily experiences, a set of questions (B2DF8 to B2DF12AP) were added in the second wave of NSDE. Respondents are asked a series of questions regarding the most positive event that occurred in the last 24 hours, the time the positive event occurred, where the event occurred (e.g., work, home) and who else was involved in these positive events.

### ***Sections H, I, J, & K: Final Day Questions***

The final interview on Day 8 ends with a series of questions (e.g., pertaining to the respondents' week. Most of the items parallel the daily questions. We intend to use these items to ascertain how accurately respondents recall these weekly experiences.

### ***Section S: Discrimination Questions***

In the second wave of NSDE, a set of discrimination questions was added. Respondents were asked whether they experienced any of the following treatment (e.g., treated with less courtesy than other people; treated with less respect than other people) today. In addition to questions B2DS14A to B2DS14I, respondents were asked to report the reason for the treatment that they experienced (B2DS15\_1 to B2DS1512).

### ***Sections: Medications and Cortisol***

A set of medications and cortisol variables was added in the second wave of NSDE. Respondents were asked whether they used certain medications during the days that they provided saliva (B2DMED1 to B2DMED10). B2DCORT to B2DCORBT pertain to saliva collection and cortisol information. Detailed information on saliva and cortisol variables can be found in the 'Saliva Collection' file.

### ***Section: Constructed Variables/Scales***

The final set of variables (B2DN\_STR to B2DNEGAV) was constructed for the ease of the data user. Please see the 'Scales Documentation' file for more comprehensive information on the variable constructions.

## **Manuals**

### ***Daily Inventory of Stressful Events (DISE) Interviewer Manual***

The Daily Inventory of Stressful Events (DISE) is designed to elicit reports of daily stressors. The DISE interview is brief and semi-structured, requiring interviewers to master techniques that differ significantly from the average American survey. The DISE interview consists of a series of stem and open-ended probe questions designed to enable researchers to estimate the contextual threat of any event a respondent reports. In order to obtain the type of objective information necessary for coding, interviewers are instructed to probe some of the responses in an extemporaneous, conversational manner. The training manual focuses on the following: training the interviewer to understand the basic ideas and principles that underlie rating the context of daily life events; probing for objective information about the event, as opposed to the respondent's emotional reaction to the event; and learning to recognize the individual, contextual factors that may increase the severity of a particular event.

### ***Daily Inventory of Stressful Events (DISE) Expert Coding Manual***

The expert coding manual describes a coding scheme for open-ended responses of daily stressful events elicited through telephone interviews using the Daily Inventory of Stressful Events (DISE). The expert coding manual describes in-depth the coding sequence for four different aspects of the coding scheme: (1) content classification: broad event classification and specific event classification, (2) focus of involvement, (3) severity, and (4) stake domains.