HRS | HEALTH AND RETIREMENT STUDY

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Sample Sizes and Response Rates

This document provides the sample sizes and interview response rates for twelve waves of data from the Health and Retirement Study (HRS) from 1992 through 2014. Some background is provided here, but for more detailed background information, please refer to this earlier version. Note that there are minor differences in numbers reported in the present document compared to the previous version due to updated sample information. The numbers in the present document reflect the most up-to-date calculations.

Background

The sample for the HRS has been built up over time. The initial cohort recruited and enrolled in 1992 was born 1931-1941. This original cohort is referred to as the HRS cohort. A second study, the Asset and Health Dynamics of the Oldest Old (AHEAD) was fielded the next year and included those born 1924 and earlier. In 1998, the two studies were combined, and two additional birth cohorts were enrolled to fill in the age gaps to create a sample representative of the population over age 50 in the United States. These two cohorts are the Children of the Depression or CODA, born 1924-1930 and the War Babies, born 1942-1947. Since then, HRS has employed a steady state design, refreshing the sample with a new six-year birth cohort every six years. The Early Baby Boomers or EBB cohort, born 1948-1953, was added in 2004. The Mid Baby Boomers or MBB, born 1954-1959, were added in 2010 and the Late Baby Boomers or LBB, born 1960-1964 in 2016. In 2010, HRS undertook an expansion of the minority sample, referred to as the minority oversample.

Description of Tables

Table 1 reports the number of cases, the number of respondents, and the response rate for the total sample, the panel sample, for each of the cohorts, and the minority oversample. The last row for each cohort also shows the wave associated with each year of data collection. Wave 1 interview response rates reflect the percent of all individuals who were determined to be eligible for HRS who completed a baseline interview. Response rates for follow-up waves (waves 2+) are based on the sample for which interviews were attempted in the designated wave. Specifically, the denominator used in calculating response rates for the first wave includes sample members who were identified as eligible in the household screener (a brief interview used to determine eligibility of household members and make a random selection among eligibles) or sample frame. The denominator used in calculating the response rates for the second and later waves includes only those who were themselves respondents at wave 1, or whose spouse or partner was a respondent at wave 1. That is, households in which no

sample member was interviewed at the baseline are dropped from the sample in subsequent waves. In addition, individuals who have died or who have requested to be permanently removed from the sample are excluded from the denominators for the follow-up waves.

Table 2 shows baseline response rates, which are the product of the screening response rate and the wave 1 interview response rate.

Recruitment for the War Baby and MBB cohorts involved two-stage screening. These cohorts were identified through a household screening interview (stage 1) that took place six years prior to their recruitment into the study (in 1992 for War Baby and 2004 for MBB). Then, at the time of their recruitment (1998 for War Baby and 2010 for MBB), attempts were made to locate the individuals in these cohorts and confirm their eligibility (stage 2) before obtaining a baseline interview.

Table 1. Sample sizes and interview response rates for each survey year, by cohort

	1992/1993	1994/1995	1996	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2008	2010	2012	2014
Total sample												
# of cases	25,726	20,331	12,622	25,533	22,240	20,559	23,606	20,775	19,478	27,192	23,062	21,525
# of respondents	20,874	18,447	10,964	21,384	19,578	18,166	20,129	18,469	17,217	22,032	20,554	18,747
Response rate	81.1%	90.7%	86.9%	83.8%	88.0%	88.4%	85.3%	88.9%	88.4%	81.0%	89.1%	87.1%
Total panel sample (excluding new cohort(s))												
# of cases		20,331	12,622	18,714	22,240	20,559	19,186	20,775	19,478	17,887	23,062	21,525
# of respondents		18,447	10,964	16,535	19,578	18,166	16,799	18,469	17,217	15,749	20,554	18,747
Response rate		90.7%	86.9%	88.4%	88.0%	88.4%	87.6%	88.9%	88.4%	88.0%	89.1%	87.1%
HRS												
# of cases	15,497	12,777	12,622	12,202	11,762	11,230	10,835	10,026	9,587	8,918	8,251	7,534
# of respondents	12,652	11,420	10,964	10,584	10,044	9,724	9,362	8,879	8,493	7,904	7,395	6,624
Response rate	81.6%	89.4%	86.9%	86.7%	85.4%	86.6%	86.4%	88.6%	88.6%	88.6%	89.6%	87.9%
Wave	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
AHEAD												
# of cases	10,229	7,554		6,512	5,526	4,559	3,766	2,979	2,362	1,709	1,295	962
# of respondents	8,222	7,027		5,951	5,000	4,107	3,365	2,700	2,142	1,526	1,165	844
Response rate	80.4%	93.0%		91.4%	90.5%	90.1%	89.4%	90.6%	90.7%	89.3%	90.0%	87.7%
Wave	1	2		3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
CODA												
# of cases				3,200	2,300	2,140	1,973	1,770	1,608	1,410	1,224	1,018
# of respondents				2,320	2,124	1,951	1,777	1,618	1,454	1,255	1,112	903
Response rate				72.5%	92.3%	91.2%	90.1%	91.4%	90.4%	89.0%	90.8%	88.7%
Wave				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
War Baby												
# of cases				3,619	2,652	2,630	2,612	2,539	2,488	2,445	2,347	2,229
# of respondents				2,529	2,410	2,384	2,295	2,237	2,165	2,138	2,065	1,939
Response rate				69.9%	90.9%	90.6%	87.9%	88.1%	87.0%	87.4%	88.0%	87.0%
Wave				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
EBB												
# of cases							4,420	3,461	3,433	3,405	3,307	3,206
# of respondents							3,330	3,035	2,963	2,926	2,826	2,745
Response rate							75.3%	87.7%	86.3%	85.9%	85.5%	85.6%
Wave							1	2	3	4	5	6
MBB												
# of cases										4,771	3,482	3,512
# of respondents										3,283	3,121	2,982
Response rate										68.8%	89.6%	84.9%
Wave										1	2	3
Minority oversample												
# of cases										4,534	3,156	3,064
# of respondents										3,000	2,870	2,710
Response rate										66.2%	90.9%	88.4%
Wave										1	2	3

Notes:
Wave 1 interview response rates reflect the percent of all individuals who were determined to be eligible for HRS who completed a baseline interview.
Response rates for follow-up waves (waves 2+) are based on the sample for which interviews were attempted in the designated wave.

Table 2. Baseline response rates, by cohort

Sample	Year entered	Baseline response rate[a]
HRS	1992	81.3
AHEAD	1993	80.1
CODA	1998	72.2
WB[b]	1998	69.7
EBB	2004	67.9
MBB[b]	2010	47.4
MOS	2010	55.9
All cohorts combined	--	73.0

[a]Product of screening RR and wave 1 interview RR

[b]Recruitment involved two-stage screening