

# NLS News



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## Watch for Details on Upcoming Summer Workshop

National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) administrators are planning to hold a workshop next summer on how to use NLS data from all cohorts to study demographic issues. The workshop, to be held in Columbus, Ohio, is funded by a grant from The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). It is aimed at advanced graduate students who are preparing to write a dissertation or at those who have completed their Ph.D., but are planning on pursuing a research program that would benefit from their learning more about the NLS. Approximately 30 to 40 students will be invited to attend. Admission will be by application, and the program will pay for travel, lodging, and meals. Watch future issues of *NLS News* for more details. □

## Work-at-Home Data Available in the NLS

In May 2001, close to 20 million people usually did some work at home as part of their primary job—this according to numbers from a special supplement to the May 2001 Current Population Survey (CPS), conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Who works at home, how much they work at home, and why they work at home are important questions to answer, especially now that technology offers more opportunity for home-based and mobile worksites.

Several NLS surveys ask questions about working at home. Combined with the demographic and other information collected in the NLS, data from these

surveys offer researchers a variety of ways to look at home-based work.

This article looks at some of the variables in the NLS that are related to working at home. Researchers are cautioned that this article is not all inclusive.

### Variables in the NLSY79

The National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) offers the most work-at-home variables of all the NLS cohorts. Beginning with the 1988 survey, respondents answered questions, for up to five reported jobs, about how many hours per week they usually worked at home. These questions also were asked in surveys conducted from 1989 through 2000.

In 1993 and 1994, respondents also answered questions on whether they ever used a computer when they worked at home and whether they ever used a telephone link to a computer at work when they worked at home. These two questions were asked about the CPS job only.

In 2002, questions were added to the NLSY79 questionnaire that specifically addressed working at home. Respondents were asked, regarding both new and existing jobs, whether they were a regular employee of a company or an organization, but worked primarily at home. Next, they gave the number of hours per week that they worked at home.

Respondents who reported working at home also were asked whether they had a business that was conducted entirely from their home or whether they had a place of business or an office that was physically separate from their home.

Teachers were asked how many hours per week they worked at school and at

home on their regular teaching duties.

Work-at-home variables can be found in the NLSY79 data set by doing an “any word in context” search for “work” and “home”.

### Variables in the NLSY97

As of 2003, respondents in the NLSY97 were between the ages of 19 and 23, so they did not have extensive employment experience yet. In the 2000 survey, NLSY97 respondents were asked whether they ran a self-employed business from home or an outside office.

Variables related to work at home are found in the NLSY97 data set in the SELF-EMPLOYMENT area of interest.

### Variables for the mature women cohort

The mature women cohort is one of the four NLS cohorts that were first surveyed in the 1960s. These four cohorts—the older men, young men, mature women, and young women—are collectively called the “original cohorts.”

Mature women respondents were asked, in 1989, whether they usually worked at home for the employer of their current or last job.

In 1992, mature women reported the hours per week during which they usually worked at home and, if they were self-employed, the hours per week during which they usually worked at home without pay.

Questions about hours per week usually worked at home were asked with regard to multiple jobs in 1995. In that survey year, women also answered questions about whether they ever used a computer at home to do work and, when they did so, whether they used a modem or a telephone link to connect to a computer at their workplace.

In the 1997, 1999, and 2001 surveys, mature women respondents were asked the number of hours per week during which they usually worked at home; this question was asked with respect to all jobs.

The surveys for 1995 through 2001 also collected information on the number of hours worked at home by the respondent's husband or partner.

Work-at-home variables are found in the mature women data set in the HOURS WORKED, SELF-EMPLOYMENT, INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION, and H/P HOURS WORKED areas of interest.

#### **Variables for the young women cohort**

The only other original cohort to be asked about work at home, the young women responded to questions in 1988 on whether they worked at home for the employer of their current or last job and, if so, how many hours per week they usually did so. Respondents also answered similar questions about other employers if they worked more than one job.

In 1991, young women answered only whether they usually worked at home for their current or last employer and, if so, the number of hours per week during which they worked.

The 1993 survey again asked

respondents whether they worked at home for their current or last employer and, for those who did, the number of hours per week during which they worked at home. Similar questions regarding work for additional employers were asked in 1993 as well. Questions about whether self-employed respondents usually worked at home without pay and, if they did, the number of hours during which they worked per week under those conditions were added in that survey year.

In 1995, like the mature women respondents, young women also answered questions about whether they ever used a computer at home to do work and, when they did use a computer, whether they used a modem or a telephone link to connect to a computer at their workplace.

Survey rounds for 1995 through 2001 asked about hours per week usually worked at home, with regards to multiple jobs.

The surveys conducted from 1995 through 2001 also collected information on the number of hours worked at home by the respondent's husband or partner.

Work-at-home variables are found in the young women data set in the HOURS WORKED, SELF-EMPLOYMENT, INDUSTRY AND OCCUPATION, and H/P HOURS WORKED areas of interest.

#### **Finding out more about work at home**

Researchers interested in pursuing the topic of work at home in more detail are encouraged to use "any word in context" searches for the various NLS cohorts, using terms such as "home," "work," "employment," and "hours." Researchers also should peruse the User's Guides for the various cohorts.

Researchers with additional questions about work-at-home variables in the NLS should contact NLS User Services. (See the back cover for contact information.) □

#### **NLS Offers Opportunities to Examine Promotions**

The NLS offers researchers many opportunities to look at data on promotions. Variables include those on the determinants and consequences of promotion, and permit examination of gender, race, training, and competition in reference to promotions.

This article looks at some of the promotion-related variables in specific NLS cohorts.

#### **Variables in the NLSY79**

The NLSY79 questionnaires ask quite a few questions about promotions. In 1984, NLSY79 respondents told whether

### **Did you know?**

National Longitudinal Survey (NLS) information is at your fingertips via the World Wide Web at <http://www.bls.gov/nls>.

Included on this site are cohort overviews, the latest cohort user's guides, economic news releases, an NLS bibliography, a data/documentation order form, an archive of *NLS News* newsletter issues, errata, custom weighting programs for several cohorts, and other tools and information for researchers.

This dynamic Web site is updated and enhanced frequently, so researchers are encouraged to visit often. □

they had ever received a promotion at their current or most recent job. If they had, they reported whether the promotion resulted in more pay, more challenges, more authority over others, or more responsibility. Similar questions were asked in 1988 and 1989.

In 1990, respondents were asked about the types of promotion they had received. Possible answers were “position was upgraded,” “took over supervisor’s job,” “promoted to higher level job in different section,” “newly created position with greater responsibilities,” “promotion resulted from a reorganization,” “same duties are performed,” “lateral move to different section,” and “other.” Respondents also reported whether anyone else was considered for the promotion that they received. If others had been considered for the promotion, the respondent was asked whether they were other workers from the same employer as the respondent at the same location, other workers from the same employer at a different location, or other workers not from the same employer.

Respondents were also asked whether they would need to acquire more education or training to get a promotion with their current employer. If they answered that a promotion with their current employer was not possible at the moment, they were asked to give the reason. Possible answers were “no further promotion potential,” “someone from above must leave,” “additional education/training is needed,” “discrimination,” and “other.”

From 1991 to 1994, respondents were asked only if vocational or technical programs in which they had enrolled since the previous interview were required for an employee to get a promotion at work.

In the 1996, 1998, and 2000 surveys, respondents were again asked a longer sequence of questions about promotions. For each job held since the previous interview, they were asked whether they had had a change in job and, if so, the date of the change, the reason for the change, whether their responsibilities changed, the type of change, and whether they felt that there was the potential to receive a promotion at their current employer in the coming 2 years. If they answered no

to the last question, they were asked to give the reason.

Variables related to promotions in the NLSY79 may be found by doing an “any word in context” search for the words “promoted,” “promotion,” or “promotions.”

#### **Variables in the Children of the NLSY79**

Like their mothers, the Children of the NLSY79—that is, the young adults or children aged 15 and older—have answered questions on promotions. From 1994 to 1998, these respondents reported on the chances of promotion at their jobs and whether training was necessary to obtain a promotion.

In 1996 and 1998, the young adults were asked about the possibility of promotion in the next 2 years. If they responded that a promotion was not possible, they were asked to give the reason.

Variables on promotions in the young adult data set may be found in the YA JOB INFORMATION area of interest.

#### **Variables in the mature women cohort**

Mature women respondents have answered questions about job changes—specifically, promotions—in many survey years.

In 1986, these respondents were asked to report whether a promotion that they had received resulted in more responsibility or more pay. These same questions were asked again in subsequent surveys.

While many of the mature women respondents were approaching or had reached retirement age as of 1997, in that survey year they answered a question on the possibility of receiving a promotion in the next 2 years. If they responded that a promotion was not possible in that time frame, they were asked why. Possible answers to this question were as follows:

- no further promotion potential
- someone must leave/vacancy must occur
- additional education or training is needed
- company reorganization
- change in company ownership
- other

These same two questions about possible promotion were asked again in 1999 and 2001 of those women who were still in the workforce.

The number of questions on promotions asked of mature women respondents throughout the years prohibits listing all of them here. Researchers interested in examining these questions in detail should look in the POSITION CHANGE area of interest in the mature women data set.

#### **Variables in the young women cohort**

Respondents in the young women cohort were not asked much about promotion until 1991. In that year, and in 1993, they were asked to report whether they had received a promotion in the previous 12 months or since the date of previous interview. If they had, they were asked whether the promotion resulted in more pay, more challenging work, more authority over others, or more responsibility.

In the 1997, 1999, and 2001 surveys, young women respondents provided information on promotions, demotions, or other changes in job position, and told whether it was possible for them to receive a promotion in the next 2 years. If a respondent answered the last question in the negative, she was asked why there was no such possibility.

Young women variables on promotion may be found in the POSITION CHANGE area of interest.

#### **Variables in the NLSY97**

The NLSY97 provides a wealth of opportunity for studying promotions.

The survey tracks occupation, job title, and wage rate in ongoing jobs in much more detail than in previous NLS cohorts. Researchers can infer promotions by examining changes in job titles and in wage rates. In addition, the training section of the NLSY97 questionnaires asks respondents to report on training programs that are associated with a promotion or job advancement.

Variables related to promotions are found in the NLSY97 data set in areas of interest LABOR FORCE STATUS, JOBS & EMPLOYERS, and WAGES & COMPENSATION.

### Variables in other NLS cohorts

Data sets for the cohorts listed in the preceding sections contain a variety of variables on promotions. Some of the NLS cohorts that are not listed provide information on promotions, but the information is limited. Researchers are encouraged to check the User's Guides for the different NLS cohorts for more information.

### Finding more information

Researchers interested in finding out more about NLS variables related to promotions are encouraged to review the individual cohorts' User's Guides, the *NLS Handbook*, and the data sets for the different cohorts. Questions should be directed to NLS User Services. (See back cover for contact information.) □

### Frequently Asked Questions

Researchers are encouraged to contact NLS User Services with questions and problems that they have encountered while accessing and using NLS data or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Some recently asked questions that may be of general interest to NLS users, together with their answers, are listed next.

*Q1: I am currently working on a project that uses the NLSY97 cohort and have a question about SPSS extraction of the data. When I extract the data, how can I save this information as an SPSS file? I noticed the bullets for SPSS in the "extract data" window, but I cannot seem to get my program to read the file.*

A1: When a data extraction is run, the NLS DB Investigator software creates the SPSS syntax file called *filename.sps*. This file contains the data dictionary, variable names, and variable labels. (Value labels are not available.) The software creates another ASCII file with the data, called *filename.dat*. You use the syntax file to read in the data.

Complete help and information is available in the *NLS DB Investigator Online Manual*. To find the manual, search under the *Help* menu within Investigator.

*Q2: I am still getting acquainted with the Children of the NLSY79 and young adult data sets. I was wondering whether a list of all the variables by survey year exists. I noticed something similar in the NLSY79 Child and Young Adult Data Users' Guide, appendix H, but not all of the variables are listed.*

A2: Appendix H in the NLSY79 *Child and Young Adult Data Users Guide* shows the kinds of information that have been collected over the years for the Children of the NLSY79 and the young adults. As you noticed, the list of variables is not exhaustive. If you download the install the child and young adult data set and the NLS DB Investigator software, you will have access to all of the variables.

*Q3: In using one of the original cohort data sets, I noticed that some respondents get a valid skip on some of the income questions. I have looked at the actual questionnaire, but I cannot figure out why some people are skipped for certain questions.*

A3: Some variables in the income section of the questionnaire (most importantly, the first variable), are coded such that questions in which they appear are valid skips, even though every respondent should go through these questions. This occurs because of partially completed interviews. That is, a respondent completes some part of the interview, but then refuses to do any more. Try removing the partial completes from the variables that are giving you trouble, and see if that does not clear up the skip-pattern issue.

*Q4: If I use a question about the 'current/most recent job' from a given year, is it possible that the information is actually from the previous year?*

A4: Yes. The valid universe in questions with "current/most recent job" in the title of the variable is the employer of those respondents who are currently working or, for those not currently working, the most recent employer since the previous interview. It is possible that a respondent last worked for the most recent employer

sometime in the previous calendar year or even further in the past if the respondent missed one or more interviews. □

### Completed NLS Research

The following is a listing of recent research based on data from the NLS cohorts that has not appeared in its current form in a previous issue of the *NLS News*. See the *NLS Annotated Bibliography* at <http://www.nlsbibliography.org> for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research.

Baum, Charles L., II. "Does Early Maternal Employment Harm Child Development? An Analysis of the Potential Benefits of Leave Taking." *Journal of Labor Economics* 21, 2 (2003): 409-448. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

Caputo, Richard K. "The Effects of Socioeconomic Status, Perceived Discrimination and Mastery of Health Status in a Youth Cohort." *Social Work in Health Care* 37, 2 (2003): 17-42. [NLSY79]

Dolinsky, Arthur L. and Caputo, Richard K. "Health and Female Self-Empowerment." *Journal of Small Business Management* 41, 3 (2003): 233-241. [Mature Women]

England, Paula; Budig, Michelle Jean; and Folbre, Nancy. "Wages of Virtue: The Relative Pay of Care Work." *Social Problems* 49, 4 (2002): 455-474. [NLSY79]

Gibson, Diane. "Food Stamp Program Participation is Positively Related to Obesity in Low Income Women." *The Journal of Nutrition* 133, 7 (July 2003): 2225-2231. [NLSY79]

Gustman, Alan L. and Steinmeier, Thomas L. "Social Security, Pensions, and Retirement Behavior Within the Family." Working Paper No. w8772, National Bureau of Economic Research, February 2002. [Mature Women]

Light, Audrey and McGarry, Kathleen. "Why Parents Play Favorites:

Explanations for Unequal Bequests.” Working Paper, California Center for Population Research, February 2003. Also: <http://papers.nber.org/papers/W9745>. [Mature Women, Young Women]

O’Neill, June E. and Hill, M. Anne. “Gaining Ground, Moving Up: The Change in the Economic Status of Single

Mothers Under Welfare Reform.” *Civic Report*, 35 (March 2003) [NLSY79]

Wight, Richard G.; Aneshensel, Carol S.; Seeman, Melvin; and Seeman, Teresa E. “Late Life Cognition Among Men: A Life Course Perspective on Psychosocial Experience.” *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics* 37, 2 (September 2003): 173-193. [Older Men]

Willson, Andrea E. “Race and Women’s Income Trajectories: Employment, Marriage, and Income Security Over the Life Course.” *Social Problems* 50, 1 (February 2003): 87. [Mature Women]

Zavodny, Madeline. “Technology and Job Separation Among Young Adults, 1980-98.” *Economic Inquiry*, 41, 2 (April 2003): 264-278. [NLSY79] □

### Are You Working With NLS Data?

If you are, we are interested in your work!

- Have you received funding to sponsor a project using NLS data?
- Are you working on a paper that uses NLS data?
- Have you published a recent paper using NLS data?

If you have received funding on a project, are working on a paper, or published a recent paper that uses NLS data, please contact: NLS User Services, Center for Human Resource Research, 921 Chatham Lane, Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43221; (614) 442-7366; e-mail: [usersvc@postoffice.chrr.ohio-state.edu](mailto:usersvc@postoffice.chrr.ohio-state.edu). Or use our online submission form—just go to [www.nls.bibliography.org](http://www.nls.bibliography.org) and click on “Submit Citation.” □

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## NLS Contact Information

NLS News is published quarterly by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It is distributed both nationwide and abroad without charge to researchers using NLS data, as well as to other interested persons.

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