

U.S. Department of Labor
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NLSY79 Round-23 Data Released

The main-file and work-history data for Round 23 of the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1979 (NLSY79) is now available to researchers.

This latest survey round presents information collected from 7,757 members of the NLSY79 cohort, or approximately 81 percent of the eligible respondents. The Round-23 release includes data from the 2008 interview of the cohort as well as all public data collected during the previous 22 interviews of the cohort. From 1979 through 1994, NLSY79 respondents were interviewed annually. Since 1994, NLSY79 respondents have been interviewed every other year.

The work-history data consist of all the created variables that track the respondents' employment status from January 1, 1978, through the most recent interview date. The data file contains each respondent's labor force status (including any military experience) during each week since January 1, 1978, as well as the usual number of hours the respondent worked each week at all jobs, and any additional information for a respondent who worked for more than one employer simultaneously in any week. The data file also contains the start and stop dates for the jobs and the usual hours the respondent worked for each employer (up to five employers) during the survey period. Also included are the rate of pay, occupation, industry, and class of worker. Dates of active military service and gaps in employment are provided as well.

The data set also contains constructed variables summarizing various aspects of respondents' labor force participation. Some of these variables are the number of weeks spent at work, the number of weeks

spent unemployed or out of the labor force, and the number of hours worked, both during the previous calendar year and during the period since the last interview. In addition, variables that summarize respondents' lifetime experiences in the labor force, such as the total number of jobs held, are created. The work-history data, which used to be separate from the main-file data, are now combined with the other data and are identified under "Work History" areas of interest in the search options on the NLS Investigator (www.nlsinfo.org/investigator).

Note: The Children of the NLSY79 2008 data set, which includes the Child and Young Adult NLSY cohorts, will be released later this year. These data are typically released several months after the main NLSY79 release. □

Round-23 questionnaire content

The Round-23 questionnaire is similar to those used in previous rounds. Each NLSY79 respondent is asked about his or her labor force behavior, educational attainment, training investments, income, health conditions, insurance coverage, and marital and fertility histories.

The Mother Supplement questions, formerly a part of the Child survey, were incorporated in the Fertility section for 2006 (Round 22) and remained there for Round 23. Mothers reported on the schooling, health, behavior problems, motor and social development, temperament, and home environment for each biological child under age 15 in their household. In 2008, most mothers reported only one child in this section, which means only one loop was made through the Mother Supplement questions.

A cognition battery was added to the

Round-22 questionnaire in 2006, and it will remain a part of the next few survey rounds. This series asks respondents to rate their memory and administers short exercises that involve recalling word lists and counting backwards by specified increments. These cognition measures also can be found in the Health and Retirement Study, another large-scale longitudinal survey.

The 2008 NLSY79 questionnaire included some changes, as outlined below.

Additions to the Round-23 survey. Many of the new variables in the survey investigate the health of respondents. The largest additional survey segment is the newly configured 50+ Health Module. These questions update previous health reports made by respondents in the baseline 40+ Health Module administered from 1998–2006. The 50+ Health Module will be administered to respondents as they turn 50 years old (by birth cohort, two birth years at a time). For Round 23, this included respondents who were born in 1957 and 1958. The module includes the mortality status of the respondent's parents, limitations to the respondent's activity level, the use of special equipment (canes, wheelchairs, hearing aids, etc.) for regular activities, and any health issues the respondent might have, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, cancer, heart ailments, stroke, arthritis, osteoporosis, mental problems, and sleep disorders. The CES-D (Center for Epidemiologic Studies-Depression) scale is included as well. These health variables can be found in the "Health Module 50 & Over" area of interest in the NLS Investigator.

A new question series on caregiving was introduced during Round 23. If respondents had a disabled or chronically ill household

member, they indicated how many hours (if any) they spent providing regular care for that person. Respondents also provided information about giving care to a relative or friend outside of the household.

Eating habits were explored with a new series of questions about fast-food consumption, snacking, skipping meals, and drinking sugared soft drinks. These join previous questions about dietary variables, such as whether the respondent is currently trying to lose or gain weight and whether the respondent reads nutritional information or ingredients on labels when food shopping.

A short series of questions about cigarette smoking (the age of the respondent when they started smoking, the number of cigarettes the respondent smoked per day, how long ago the respondent quit) was added back into this survey round. Respondents last answered these questions in Round 18.

The NLSY79 assets module, asked every other round, was included in Round 23. The assets module series includes questions about the value of and debt owed for vehicles; checking, savings, and money market account balances; the worth of certificates of deposit, government bonds, mutual funds, pension plans, and insurance policies; real estate holdings, including residences, farms, and businesses; loans held; and net worth. A series of questions about personal finance, first asked in 2004, also returned during this round, with questions about bankruptcy, missed payments on bills, the number of maxed-out credit cards, and being turned down for credit.

Questions about retirement expectations were included in the 2008 survey. (A smaller sample of respondents answered this module in the previous survey.) Questions included the age the respondent is likely to retire, the probability the respondent will not be working for pay at age 62, 65, and 67, and any efforts made to learn about retirement planning (such as attending seminars, consulting a financial planner, or reading books/magazines).

Deleted for the Round-23 survey. The Current Population Survey questions about jobs were removed for the 2008 interview round. This is currently a rotating module, to be administered every two or three rounds.

The Job Risk section, asked for the past

few rounds, was removed from the 2008 survey. The survey also did not include those questions on how much work (if any) was missed due to the respondents' children's asthma, although these were asked in previous rounds.

The Consumption, Impatience, and Risk section, added in 2006, has been removed for the 2008 survey. This series of questions collected information on household expenditures and asked about respondents' situations involving hypothetical risk and impatience factors with regard to acquiring or relinquishing assets.

The Volunteerism question series (including information concerning unpaid volunteer activities, the amount of time spent volunteering per year, and the types of volunteer activities in which the respondent was involved) was removed for this round. □

Obtaining NLSY79 data

NLSY79 main-file data, Child and Young Adult data and supporting documentation, along with data and documentation from the other NLS cohorts, can be accessed free of charge via the NLS Investigator at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator. NLSY79 geocode-data variables, which provide information on each respondent's county of residence, will be available for Round 23 as a separate data set approximately 3 months after the release of the main data set. Researchers interested in obtaining the geocode CD must complete the accessing agreement required by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. For more details on the geocode release, see the NLSY79 section of the NLS Web site (www.bls.gov/nls) or contact NLS User Services at usersvc@chrr.osu.edu. □

Cross-round Versions of NLSY79 Supplemental Fertility Variables Created

Prior to 2008, the fertility and relationship variables in the NLSY79 Supplemental Fertility data file (now known as the "Fertility and Relationship History" area of interest in the NLS Investigator) were produced only as cross-sectional variable sets for each round. A cross-round (or XRND as it is referred to in the documentation and data search software) version of these

variables has now been released as part of the NLSY79 data set. (In a number of surveys, the Center for Human Resource Research at the Ohio State University has created variables that are not round-specific, but rather update as of the last survey completed for all respondents. This saves data users from having to go through and pick off multiple rounds of variables on the same topic for those that missed the last interview.) These XRND variables have been created for all respondents using the data from each respondent's last interview.

The set of XRND created fertility variables include the dates of birth and gender of all biological children, as well as pregnancy and marriage history variables. The pregnancy variables (asked of females only) include the respondent's age when first pregnant, the month and year of the first pregnancy, the outcome of the first pregnancy, the total number of pregnancies, the total number of abortions, and the total number of stillbirths and miscarriages.

The marriage history variables (asked of both males and females) include the age when first married, the month and year that the first marriage (and, if needed, the second and third marriages) began and ended, and the number of months between the first marriage and first birth (along with a flag variable to indicate which came first). Also available are variables that provide the age of the respondent at the time of the first, second, and third births and the number of months between these births.

In addition, this XRND variable set includes the last known residence of each child. The last-known-residence variables are intended to help users to more easily identify any children who are deceased or given up for adoption. These XRND last-known-residence variables do not replace the year-specific residence variables, which are likely to be of interest to researchers who are considering residence trends across time.

Users should note that these XRND variables include data for members of the dropped oversamples as well as respondents who have not been interviewed for many rounds for other reasons. A year-of-last-interview variable is available to help users when using these XRND variables. The traditional cross-sectional variables will continue to be available for each subsequent round, and the XRND variables will also continue to be updated.

Data users can identify this set of XRND variables in NLS Investigator by searching under the Fertility and Relationship History/Created area of interest (with survey year=XRND). Researchers interested in using the supplemental fertility file variables can find more information in Appendix 5 of the NLSY79 Codebook Supplement. □

Interested in NLSY79 Attitudinal Scale Data? Summary Score Variables Now Available

The NLSY79 data set features several attitudinal scale scores, including the CES-D score, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem score, the Pearlin Mastery score, and the Rotter Locus of Control score. To help researchers more easily use these data, summary score variables for these scales have now been constructed.

The CES-D scale is a self-report scale that measures the current prevalence of depression symptoms. Respondents rate a series of statements regarding how they felt during the week prior to the interview. The NLSY79 data set contains two versions of the CES-D: a 20-item scale (in the 1992 survey year) and a 7-item scale (in the 1992 and 1994 survey years and in the 40+ Health Module and 50+ Health Module beginning in 1998 and 2008, respectively). The new summary variables provide a sum of the CES-D items, with a possible range from 0 to 60 for the 20-item scale and a range from 0 to 21 for the 7-item scale (higher scores indicate the presence of more depressive symptoms). If the respondent did not answer all of the CES-D questions, a flag variable is available that indicates the number of missing items.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem scale measures the self-evaluation that an individual makes and customarily maintains. The 10-item scale was given in 1980, 1987, and 2006. The summary variables provide a sum ranging from 0 to 30, with a higher score indicating higher self-esteem.

The Pearlin Mastery scale is designed to measure self-concept and self-references, the extent to which individuals perceive themselves in control of forces that significantly influence their lives. The seven-point scale was given to respondents in 1992. The summary variables provide a sum ranging from 7 to 28, with higher

scores representing greater mastery.

The Rotter Locus of Control scale, given to NLSY79 respondents in 1979, is designed to measure the extent to which individuals believe they have control over their lives (internal control) and the extent to which individuals believe that their environment (chance, fate, or luck) controls their lives (external control). To determine this measure, respondents rated pairs of statements.

To create the summary variables, scores of the four pairs of statements for the Rotter scale were summed, with a total score ranging from 4 to 16.

All variables can be found in the NLSY79 public user data set at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator. □

NLS Terms to Know: “Reason for Noninterview”

The Reason for Noninterview (RNI) created variable provides the final case outcome or disposition count for all NLSY97 respondents for each round (whether or not they participated in that round), beginning in Round 2. Researchers often use the RNI variable because it provides a clear count of participation versus nonparticipation. If the respondent participated in a round, the RNI variable provides information about the type of interview conducted (whether it was completed in person, by phone, or while incarcerated, etc.). If the respondent did not participate in that round, the RNI variable gives the reason for nonparticipation, such as respondents who refused to participate, were not locatable, were too ill or handicapped for participation, were inaccessible because of military duty, or who were deceased.

To access the NLSY97 RNI variable, search the Investigator for the question name “RNI.”

An RNI variable is available for other NLS cohorts with some variation. For the NLSY79 cohort, RNI provides the reason for nonparticipation and does not give details about the type of participant interview conducted.

The NLSY79 Child Survey uses two types of variables to indicate child interview status. From 1986–1996, users should rely on the CSAMWT (child sampling weight) variables to identify children interviewed. Starting in 1998, there are additional created variables (INCS and

INCSAS to determine whether there is a child supplement available for this child, and INMS to determine whether the child has a mother supplement record) that specify which instruments were completed in each child survey year. The Young Adult cohort uses a combination of two variables to determine interview status for each round, for example, “Is Child Eligible for Young Adult Interview in Current Round?” (C00112.12) and “Was Child Interviewed As Young Adult in Current Round?” (C00112.13).

For the Original Cohorts, the RNI variable for the Mature Women and Young Women was revised using Social Security Administration reports to make the deceased count more accurate. (See R76154.00 in 2003.) For the Older Men, the final survey year (1990) included an effort to interview the widows of deceased participants, so the 1990 RNI variable includes categories of widow nonparticipation. For the Young Men, see the RNI variable R06835.00 for 1981 as an example.

The Latest NLSY Data Releases and Collections

The following is the latest schedule for NLSY79 and NLSY97 data collections and data releases:

- **NLSY97 Survey.** The NLSY97 Round-12 data are scheduled for release in the summer of 2010. Round-13 interviews ended mid-April 2010, with the Round-14 field effort slated to begin in September 2010.
- **NLSY79 Main Survey.** Round-23 data from the NLSY79 main survey has now been released. Round-24 data collection is currently in progress.
- **NLSY79 Child Survey and NLSY79 Young Adult Survey.** Both surveys are fielded during the same approximate timeframe as the main NLSY79 survey. The next full data release is scheduled for late 2010 and will include 2008 data for both the Child and Young Adult surveys. A preliminary release of the 2008 Young Adult data is already available.

All public NLS data can be accessed at www.nlsinfo.org/investigator. Each cohort's data set includes a merge of all previous rounds from that cohort that have been released. □

NLS-related Dissertations Now Number More Than 800

As of April 2010, the NLS *Annotated Bibliography* reports that 830 Ph.D. dissertations based on NLS data have been completed.

Since the 1970s, graduate students have used NLS survey project data frequently. A sampling of Ph.D. dissertations from the past two years includes such diverse topics as entering and exiting self-employment, father involvement and gender role ideology, maternal labor supply and children's achievement, children's adjustment to parents' marital disruption, predictors of early fertility and sex, drug use and depression, wage differentials between Hispanic and White women, incarceration and illegal earnings, school-to-work transitions, impact of birth order, patterns of religious participation, credit restraints and education, parental job loss and its effect on children, determinants of women's body mass, and bullying.

The *Bibliography* can be accessed at www.nlsbibliography.org and can be searched by format to find dissertations or theses. It also can be searched by author, title, source, keyword, cohort, year, or abstract. If you used NLS data in writing your dissertation, and the dissertation is not yet listed in our database, feel free to submit a citation. (Instructions for submissions can be found on the *Bibliography* Web site.) □

Frequently Asked Questions

The NLS staff encourages researchers to contact NLS User Services with questions and problems encountered while accessing and using NLS data or documentation. Every effort is made to answer these inquiries. Following are some recent questions and answers that may be of general interest to NLS users:

Q1. How can I determine what time of the year an NLSY respondent was interviewed for a particular survey year?

A1. The following created variables

provide the day, month, and year of an NLSY97 respondent's interview: CV_INTERVIEW_DATE~D, CV_INTERVIEW_DATE~M, and CV_INTERVIEW_DATE~Y. These variables are available for each survey year.

For the NLSY79, the month and day of interview variables are part of the "Interviewer Remarks" area of interest. (See T09673.00 and T09673.01 as an example for the 2006 survey year.)

Q2. As part of my research, I am hoping to use the Family Conflict Scale variables in the NLSY79 Young Adult data. Can you provide me with some information on this scale?

A2. The Family Conflict Scale, part of the 2006 data set, is a six-item scale where young adult respondents rate statements about the degree of conflict in their family. Statements include: "We fight a lot in our family," "Family members hardly ever lose their temper," "Family members sometimes get so angry they throw things," "Family members always calmly discuss problems," "Family members often criticize each other," and "Family members sometimes hit each other." (See Y19266.00 through Y19271.00.) This scale was also used in the Panel Study of Income Dynamics.

The six-item Family Conflict Scale is a subset of the Family Environment Scale (FES) developed by Bernice S. Moos and Rudolf H. Moos. The FES has been used in clinical settings as well as for program evaluation.

Q3. What variables should I use to figure out the number of NLSY97 respondents who began their post-secondary education experience at a two-year college?

A3. The SCH_COLLEGE_STATUS event history variables indicate whether the respondent is enrolled in college (and the type of college) for a particular month. The NEWSCHOOL roster includes the start and stop dates of enrollment for each school, the school types, and the reason the respondent left a particular school.

Q4. Does the NLSY79 have any pre-1994 variables that ask about IRAs or Keogh plans? I can find variables starting in 1994 but not before.

A4. In the pre-1994 questionnaires,

information about IRAs and Keogh plans was part of a single question that also asked about money in savings and checking accounts, money market funds, credit unions, savings bonds, certificates of deposit, or money owed to the respondent. (See variable R27359.00 as an example.) Since "IRA" and "Keogh" are not part of the codebook titles for these pre-1994 variables, it is understandable how a user might have trouble finding these variables during a routine search. (Use the "search by question text" option to find them.) Starting in 1994, the question regarding IRAs or Keogh plans was split out separately. The question now asks if the respondent has "any money in IRAs, Keoghs, variable annuities, 529 plans, or other tax-advantaged accounts."

Q5. Are there any questions about perceived job difficulty or skill mismatch in either the NLSY79 or NLSY97?

A5. The Job Satisfaction variables are the closest the surveys come to asking about "perceived job difficulty or skill mismatch." In the NLSY79, three sets of job satisfaction measures have been collected for employed respondents during select survey years. These include (1) a global job satisfaction four-point scale variable asked each survey year, (2) a variable, asked during the 1979-87 survey years, inquiring about the respondent's satisfaction with a government jobs program, and (3) a facet-specific job satisfaction scale (asked during the 1979-82 and 1988 survey years) that included statements about whether the respondent is given a chance to do things he or she does best, whether the respondent is learning valuable skills. The respondent is also asked to assess how dangerous the job is, the pleasantness of the surroundings, exposure to unhealthy conditions, pay, job security, friendliness of coworkers, working conditions, competency of the supervisor, and chances for promotion.

The NLSY97 includes a five-point global job satisfaction variable for each of the respondent's jobs. □

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 www.nlsbibliography.org for a comprehensive listing of NLS-related research):

Barnes, Michael G. and Trenton G. Smith. "Tobacco Use as Response to Economic Insecurity: Evidence from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth." *B.E. Journal of Economic Analysis and Policy* 9,1 (5 November 2009): Article 47. [NLSY79]

Baum, Charles L. "Effects of Vehicle Ownership on Employment." *Journal of Urban Economics* 66,3 (November 2009): 151-163. [NLSY79]

Bernal, Raquel and Michael P. Keane. "Quasi-structural Estimation of a Model of Childcare Choices and Child Cognitive Ability Production." *Journal of Econometrics* 156,1 (May 2010): 164-189. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

Berzin, Stephanie Cosner. "Understanding Foster Youth Outcomes: Is Propensity Scoring Better Than Traditional Methods?" *Research on Social Work Practice* 20,1 (January 2010): 100-111. [NLSY97]

Booth, Jonathan E., John W. Budd, and Kristen M. Munday. "Never Say Never? Uncovering the Never-Unionized in the United States." *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 48,1 (March 2010): 26-52. [NLSY79]

Brookmeyer, Kathryn A. and Christopher C. Henrich. "Disentangling Adolescent Pathways of Sexual Risk Taking." *Journal of Primary Prevention* 30,6 (November 2009): 677-696. [NLSY79 Young Adult]

Campbell, Lori A. and Toby L. Parcel. "Children's Home Environments in Great Britain and the United States." *Journal of Family Issues* 31,5 (May 2010): 559-584. [Children of the NLSY79]

Cheadle, Jacob E., Paul R. Amato, and Valarie King. "Patterns of Nonresident Father Contact." *Demography* 47,1 (February 2010): 206-225. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79]

Classen, Timothy J. "Measures of the Intergenerational Transmission of Body Mass Index between Mothers and Their Children in the United States, 1981-2004." *Econom-*

ics and Human Biology 8,1 (March 2010): 30-43. [Children of the NLSY79, NLSY79, NLSY79 Young Adult]

Gong, Tao. "Do Parental Transfers Reduce Youths' Incentives to Work?" *Labour: Review of Labour Economics and Industrial Relations* 23,4 (December 2009): 653-676. [NLSY97]

Hart, Sara A., Stephen A. Petrill, and Claire M. Kamp Dush. "Genetic Influences on Language, Reading, and Mathematics Skills in a National Sample: An Analysis Using the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth." *Language, Speech and Hearing Services in Schools* 41,1 (January 2010): 118-128. [Children of the NLSY79]

Hayford, Sarah R. "Evolution of Fertility Expectations Over the Life Course." *Demography* 46,4 (November 2009): 765-783. [NLSY79]

Hollister, Matissa. "Is Optimal Matching Suboptimal?" *Sociological Methods and Research* 38,2 (November 2009): 235-264. [NLSY79]

Huang, Fali and Myoung-Jae Lee. "Does Television Viewing Affect Children's Behaviour?" *Pacific Economic Review* 14,4 (October 2009): 474-501. [Children of the NLSY79]

Jackson, Margot I. "Understanding Links Between Adolescent Health and Educational Attainment." *Demography* 46,4 (November 2009): 671-694. [NLSY97]

Mohanty, Madhu S. "Effects of Positive Attitude on Happiness and Wage: Evidence from the US Data." *Journal of Economic Psychology* 30,6 (December 2009): 884-897. [NLSY79]

Peralta, Robert L. and C. André Christie-Mizell. "Gender Gap in Alcohol Consumption during Late Adolescence and Young Adulthood: Gendered Attitudes and Adult Roles." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 50,4 (December 2009): 410-426. [NLSY79 Young Adult]

Powell, Lisa M., Zhenxiang Zhao, and Youfa Wang. "Food Prices and Fruit and Vegetable Consumption among Young American Adults." *Health and Place* 15,4

(December 2009): 1064-1070. [NLSY97]

Romich, Jennifer L., Shelly Lundberg, and Kwok Ping Tsang. "Independence Giving or Autonomy Taking? Childhood Predictors of Decision-Sharing Patterns Between Young Adolescents and Parents." *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 19,4 (December 2009): 587-600. [Children of the NLSY79]

Shandra, Carrie L. and Dennis P. Hogan. "Educational Attainment Process Among Adolescents with Disabilities and Children of Parents with Disabilities." *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education* 56,4 (December 2009): 363-379. [NLSY97]

Sipsma, Heather, Katie Brooks Biello, Heather Cole-Lewis, and Trace Kershaw. "Like Father, Like Son: The Intergenerational Cycle of Adolescent Fatherhood." *American Journal of Public Health* 100,3 (March 2010): 517-524. [NLSY97]

Van Cleave, Jeanne, Steven L. Gortmaker, and James M. Perrin. "Dynamics of Obesity and Chronic Health Conditions Among Children and Youth." *Journal of the American Medical Association* 303,7 (February 2010): 623-630. [Children of the NLSY79]

Varner, Fatima and Jelani Mandara. "Marital Transitions and Changes in African American Mothers' Depressive Symptoms: The Buffering Role of Financial Resources." *Journal of Family Psychology* 23,6 (December 2009): 839-847. [NLSY79]

Winslow-Bowe, Sarah E. "Husbands' and Wives' Relative Earnings: Exploring Variation by Race, Human Capital, Labor Supply, and Life Stage." *Journal of Family Issues* 30,10 (October 2009): 1405-1432. [NLSY79]

Wolfe, Joseph D. "Age at First Birth and Alcohol Use." *Journal of Health and Social Behavior* 50,4 (December-2009): 395-409. [NLSY79]

Zimmer, David M. and David M. Welsch. "Effect of Health and Poverty on Early Childhood Cognitive Development." *Atlantic Economic Journal* 38,1 (March 2010): 37-49. [Children of the NLSY79]