

## THE NLS ORIGINAL COHORTS: OLDER AND YOUNG MEN

The NLS of Older Men and the NLS of Young Men began in the mid-1960s because the U.S. Department of Labor was interested in studying the employment patterns of two groups of men. Respondents to the NLS of Older Men were a group of men in their 40s and 50s who were making decisions about the timing and extent of their labor force withdrawal and were planning for retirement. The NLS of Young Men comprised men in their teens and early 20s, who were completing school and making decisions about pursuing additional training or schooling, entering the workforce, or joining the military. Although surveys have been discontinued with these cohorts, the data are included on the cross-cohort CD or can be downloaded from the NLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/nls](http://www.bls.gov/nls).

### Chapter organization

This chapter begins with a summary of the NLS men's samples and special features of the sampling design. Next, users will find information on the interviews, fielding periods, retention rates, and sampling weights for the cohorts. The chapter continues with descriptions of the topical content of the data sets and information on the specific data files and documentation available for each cohort. Finally, tables provide further detail on the types of questions asked during the men's surveys and the survey years in which they were included.

### The samples

The U.S. Census Bureau established the two cohorts of men through two household screenings. From the first household screening in early 1966, 5,518 Older Men ages 45 to 59 as of April 1, 1966, were designated for interview. Following a second screening in September 1966, 5,713 Young Men ages 14 to 24 as of April 1, 1966, were selected for interview. Each sample group served to represent the civilian, noninstitutionalized population of men in the same age group residing in the United States at the time the samples were selected. To meet the survey requirement of providing separate, statistically reliable estimates for black Americans, blacks were to be represented in the sample at twice their expected rate in the population.

Both of the men's cohorts were first interviewed during 1966. Of the 5,518 Older Men identified during the household screenings, 5,020 (91 percent) participated in the 1966 survey. Of the 5,713 Young Men designated for interview, 5,225 (91 percent) completed the initial interview in 1966. Table 6.1 presents, by race, the numbers of respondents in the two NLS men's cohorts interviewed during the initial survey and two subsequent surveys.

### Multiple-respondent households

*Older and Young Men.* The sampling design used by the Census Bureau to select respondents for the four 1960s cohorts made it possible for any given NLS household to include a mix of respondents from the same cohort or different cohorts. At the time the samples were drawn, one-third of the Older Men shared their household with at least one other NLS respondent; more than three-quarters of the Young Men

**Table 6.1. Number of respondents interviewed by cohort and race: Older and Young Men**

Cohort	Initial survey	10-year survey	Final survey
Older Men	1966	1976	1990
Total	5,020	3,487	12,092
Nonblack	3,600	2,521	1,603
Blacks	1,420	966	489
Young Men	1966	1976	1981
Total	5,225	3,695	3,398
Nonblack	3,787	2,848	2,622
Blacks	1,438	847	776

<sup>1</sup>Interviews were also conducted with 2,206 widows or other family members of deceased respondents; these interviews collected information about both the original member of the cohort and his widow.

resided with at least one other NLS respondent. A matching process, conducted after interviews were completed with each of the 1960s cohorts, identified common relationships in these multiple-respondent households during the early survey years. Variables in the data files identify each of the respondents belonging to a multiple-respondent household at the time of the screening.

Table 6.2 presents the numbers of matched respondent pairs for the NLS of Older and Young Men by cohort and relationship. During the initial survey years, 492 Older Men respondents shared a household with a wife who was a respondent in the Mature Women cohort, 963 Older Men lived with a daughter who was a member of the Young Women cohort, and 1,039 Older Men resided with a son who was a respondent in the Young Men cohort. Originally, 574 Young Men respondents shared a household with a wife who was a respondent in the Young Women cohort and 1,620 Young Men lived with a mother who was a member of the Mature Women cohort. In addition, some of the original Young Men lived with siblings participating in the surveys: 902 shared a household with a brother who also was a respondent in the Young Men cohort and 1,243 Young Men lived with a sister who was a member of the Young Women cohort. Attrition and mortality of one or more members have reduced the number of pairs for whom data are available across survey years.

These pairs offer unique samples for a number of research topics. However, the original cohorts do not contain nationally representative samples of spouses and siblings of all ages and living arrangements. For example, sibling pairs represent only those who were fairly close in age and

both in the sampled age range at the time of the initial survey. Researchers should be aware of these statistical sampling issues when using NLS data to study siblings and spouses.

### Interviews and fielding periods

**Older Men.** Respondents in the Older Men cohort completed 12 interviews from 1966 through 1983 and an additional interview sponsored by the National Institute on Aging in 1990. Interviewers from the Census Bureau conducted all of the surveys. Interviewers administered seven of these surveys personally and conducted five by telephone; the third survey of this cohort, in 1968, was mailed to the respondents. While the first several interviews took place during the spring, the fielding of most surveys occurred from July through September. The 1990 interviews of living respondents and widows or other family members of deceased respondents took place from October through December. Paper-and-pencil instruments (PAPI) were used exclusively during the 1966–90 interviews of this cohort. Interviews with the Older Men have ceased.

**Young Men.** The Young Men cohort participated in 12 surveys from 1966 through 1981. Interviewers from the Census Bureau conducted all of the surveys. Interviewers administered eight surveys in person and conducted four by telephone. The fielding period typically lasted from October through December. PAPI instruments were used exclusively for all interviews with this cohort. The last interviews with the Young Men were conducted in 1981.

**Table 6.2. Number of respondent pairs by cohort and relationship identified during the initial survey years: Older and Young Men**

Cohort relationships: Older Men	Number of pairs	Cohort relationships: Young Men	Number of pairs
Older Men-Mature Women	506	Young Men-Older Men	1,099
Husband-wife (same household)	492	Son-father (same household)	1,039
Father-daughter (same household)	11	Son-father (different household)	60
Brother-sister (same household)	3	Young Men-Young Women	2,398
Older Men-Young Women	988	Brother-sister (same household)	1,243
Father-daughter (same household)	963	Brother-sister (different household)	571
Father-daughter (different household)	25	Husband-wife (same household)	574
Older Men-Young Men	1,099	Husband-wife (different household)	10
Father-son (same household)	1,039	Young Men-Mature Women	1,671
Father-son (different household)	60	Son-mother (same household)	1,620
		Son-mother (different household)	51
		Young Men-Young Men	902
		Brothers (same household)	902

### Attrition

**Older Men.** Attrition from the Older Men sample remained relatively low through the late 1960s; 87 percent of the original 5,020 respondents were still participating in 1969. In the 1970s and early 1980s, several factors, including respondent mortality, contributed to the gradual rise in attrition. At the time of the last interview in 1990, the retention rate, calculated as the percentage of base-year respondents interviewed in a given year, was approximately 42 percent. Table 6.3 presents the total number of respondents interviewed during each survey and the corresponding retention rate.

With the exception of the 1990 resurvey, respondents institutionalized in jail or long-term care facilities were not interviewed. Through 1983, the Census Bureau enforced a policy of not interviewing those respondents who refused to be interviewed or were not interviewed for any reason for 2 consecutive years. As of the 1983 survey, the major groups not interviewed included 1,498 respondents reported as deceased by the Census Bureau, 686 respondents who refused an interview, and 159 who were dropped from the sample after 2 consecutive years of noninterview. The Census Bureau attempted to include nearly all dropped respondents (or a surviving family member of deceased respondents) in the

1990 resurvey.

The 1990 resurvey of the NLS of Older Men was unique in that interviewers surveyed two respondent groups. Participants included 2,092 cohort members, or more than 41 percent of the original sample, and 2,206 widows or other family members of deceased respondents. Because the survey obtained information from this second sample group about the life experiences of the deceased sample member, the 1990 survey had a total data collection completion rate of 86 percent of the original sample. Of the eligible respondents, only 235 living Older Men were not interviewed in 1990; 154 of these refused an interview. No widow or other family member was interviewed for 487 deceased respondents.

**Young Men.** When surveys ceased for the Young Men cohort in 1981, 3,398 (almost 65 percent) of the original 5,225 respondents were interviewed. Table 6.3 presents the total number of respondents interviewed at each survey point and the corresponding retention rates. By the time of the 1981 survey, the major groups not interviewed included 866 respondents who refused an interview, 545 respondents dropped from the sample after 2 consecutive years of noninterview, 139 respondents reported as deceased by the

**Table 6.3. Interview schedules and retention rates: Older and Young Men**

Year	Older Men				Young Men			
	Primary type of interview	Total interviewed	Retention rate <sup>1</sup>	Response rate, living respondents only	Primary type of interview	Total interviewed	Retention rate <sup>1</sup>	Response rate, living respondents only
1966	Personal	5,020	100.0	100.0	Personal	5,225	100.0	100.0
1967	Personal	4,744	94.5	95.6	Personal	4,790	91.7	91.9
1968	Mail	4,648	92.6	95.1	Personal	4,318	82.6	83.0
1969	Personal	4,381	87.3	91.5	Personal	4,033	77.2	77.7
1970	—	—	—	—	Personal	3,993	76.4	77.1
1971	Personal	4,175	83.2	90.3	Personal	3,987	76.3	77.2
1973	Telephone	3,951	78.7	88.7	Telephone	4,014	76.8	78.0
1975	Telephone	3,732	74.3	87.2	Telephone	3,977	76.1	77.4
1976	Personal	3,487	69.5	83.4	Personal	3,695	70.7	72.0
1978	Telephone	3,219	64.1	80.2	Telephone	3,538	67.7	69.3
1980	Telephone	3,001	59.8	78.7	Telephone	3,438	65.8	67.5
1981	Personal	2,832	56.4	76.3	Personal	3,398	65.0	66.8
1983	Telephone	2,633	52.5	74.8	—	—	—	—
1990	Personal	<sup>2</sup> 2,092	41.5	<sup>3</sup> —	—	—	—	—

<sup>1</sup>Retention rate is defined as the percentage of base-year respondents who were interviewed in any given survey year. Included in the calculations are deceased and institutionalized respondents, as well as those serving in the military.

<sup>2</sup>In addition to the 2,092 surviving members of the original sample interviewed during 1990, interviews were also completed

with 1,341 widows and 865 other family members who supplied data about deceased respondents.

<sup>3</sup>"Reason for Noninterview" variables are available for 1990, but because coding categories differ substantially from those used in the 1967 through 1983 survey years, the retention rate in 1990 for living respondents only is omitted from this table.

Census Bureau, and 111 respondents who were in the Armed Forces and thus not eligible for interview. As with the Older Men cohort, institutionalized respondents were not interviewed.

### Sampling weights

**Older and Young Men.** The Center for Human Resource Research (CHRR) at The Ohio State University created sampling weights for each cohort after the initial interview and adjusted them after each subsequent interview. These weights account for the overrepresentation of blacks in the initial sample and for persons who were not interviewed. Analysis of each of the cohorts indicates that the reweighting scheme used to compensate for nonresponse has allowed the samples to remain representative (Parnes, 1992; Rhoton, 1984).

### Major data elements

Surveys of the men's cohorts have collected two basic types of information: (1) Core data on each respondent's labor market experiences, education and training, family income, household composition, marital status, and health, and (2) supplementary data specific to the age, sex, and stage of life or labor market attachment of the cohort (for example, military service information, retirement plans and experiences, leisure-time activities, and volunteer work).

This section provides brief summaries of the major data elements available for respondents in the NLS of Older and Young Men. Certain data elements were collected longitudinally, while others are available only for selected survey years; not all data elements are present for all respondents.

Readers should keep in mind that some categories are cohort-specific and may not be applicable to respondents in both cohorts. For example, the Older Men surveys focused on collecting information about retirement planning, health conditions, insurance coverage, and the ways in which respondents spent their leisure time. The surveys of the younger cohort traced in detail the respondents' educational experiences, occupational aspirations, training investments, and career choices. The descriptions of the data elements note differences in data collection between the male cohorts.

Because the descriptions below are not comprehensive, readers interested in additional information should review the topical descriptions of variables found in the *Older and Young Men User's Guide*, examine the detailed variable tables provided at the end of this chapter, acquire copies of the survey instruments, and browse the documentation files contained in the Older Men and Young Men data set available online. The *Older and Young Men User's Guide* can be downloaded from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Web site at [www.bls.gov/nls](http://www.bls.gov/nls).

Data elements for the NLS of Older and Young Men are discussed in the order presented in figure 6.1.

#### 1. Labor market experiences

**Older and Young Men.** Each survey collected information regarding the labor force status of respondents during the survey week. Employed respondents provided details about their occupation, class of worker, rate of pay, hours worked per week, and attitude toward their current job. Employed respondents also reported the number of weeks they were employed; reference periods varied by survey. Additional questions asked during selected surveys collected information about the respondent's job or job-related activities (such as the shift worked, union membership, commuting time, tenure, types of fringe benefits, and eligibility for retirement benefits).

Respondents who reported being unemployed or out of the labor force provided data about their activities. Included is information on methods the respondent used to seek employment, the number of weeks he spent looking for work, his plans to seek employment, the number of weeks he spent out of the labor force, and his reasons for not seeking work.

Selected surveys collected detailed information for up to seven intervening jobs. Specific data include start and stop dates for each job, the number of hours worked, the occupation and industry, the respondent's class of worker, his rate of pay, and his reason for leaving the job.

**Figure 6.1. Data elements in the NLS of Older and Young Men**

1	Labor market experiences
2	Work-related discrimination
3	Training investments
4	Schooling information (school records, aptitude, IQ)
5	Military experiences
6	Retirement plans and experiences
7	Volunteer work and leisure-time activities
8	Income and assets
9	Physical well-being, health care, and health insurance
10	Alcohol and cigarette use
11	Attitudes, aspirations, and psychological well-being
12	Geographic and environmental data
13	Demographics, family background, and household composition
14	Marital history, children, and dependents
15	Household chores

## 2. Work-related discrimination

**Older and Young Men.** Older Men answered questions on work-related discrimination during the 1971, 1976, and 1980 interviews; the Young Men responded to these questions in 1971 and 1976. In general, each series of questions asked the respondent whether he had experienced a particular type of discrimination because of age, race, religion, or sex during a specified period. A follow-up question asked for information on the type(s) of discrimination experienced.

## 3. Training investments

**Older Men.** Every personal interview of the Older Men (except the 1990 survey) collected information on the training experiences of the respondents. The initial survey asked: (1) Whether the respondent had been enrolled in a vocational or commercial training program while in high school and (2) whether he had ever been enrolled in a business or technical training program, a program offered by a company training school, an Armed Forces training program, or another type of apprenticeship or vocational training program since he had stopped his regular schooling. If he had, the questionnaire collected details about each training program.

Subsequent surveys updated this information with data on additional training courses or educational programs in which the respondent had enrolled either on the job or elsewhere. Core information was gathered on type, length, sponsor, completion status, and use on current job, as well as hours per week spent in the training, the reason the respondent did not complete it, and the reason for enrollment in additional training. The 1971 survey collected details on the plans of the respondent to take additional training courses. A special set of questions fielded during 1981 gathered information on respondents' participation in retirement training programs and the usefulness of those programs in their plans for various aspects of retirement living.

**Young Men.** The 1966 survey gathered information about the respondent's plans for additional education or training and asked whether he had ever been enrolled in a business or technical training program, a program offered by a company training school, or another vocational or apprenticeship training program since he had stopped his regular schooling. If he had, the interviewer collected details about each training program. These details included the type of training; number of months and hours per week spent in training; whether the program was completed and, if not, the reason; and use of the skills acquired in the training program on the respondent's current or last job.

Subsequent surveys updated this training record by collecting the same details about programs in which the respondent had enrolled since the date of his last interview. In

addition, the 1970 and 1975 surveys collected retrospective data on any training or educational courses taken prior to October 1967 and asked about the respondent's plans to enroll in training courses in the future. Beginning with the 1973 interview, the surveys included questions about whether the respondent had participated in an apprenticeship program; the 1975 survey fielded a retrospective set of questions on apprenticeships. The military service series included questions on the types of training the respondent had taken while in the Armed Forces and the length of each training program. This series also asked whether the respondent used skills acquired in the training program on his current or last job.

## 4. Schooling information (school records, aptitude, IQ)

**Older Men.** Respondents in the Older Men cohort provided information on their educational status and attainment at selected survey points. The initial survey collected information on the highest grade the respondent had attended and completed and asked whether he had been enrolled in a vocational or commercial curriculum during high school. The 1976 interview gathered information on the highest grade completed by the respondent, the year of his high school graduation, the year he last attended college, whether he had earned a college degree, and, if so, the highest college degree he attained.

Some surveys include information on current school enrollment, highest grade attended, and highest grade completed for each family member living in the respondent's household at the time of the interview.

**Young Men.** A primary focus of the Young Men surveys was on schooling and the transition from school to work. Therefore, the interviews of this cohort regularly collected information on both the respondent's enrollment in regular schooling and his educational attainment. In addition, a separate 1968 survey of high schools attended by respondents in this cohort provides details on school characteristics and testing information for the respondent.

Each respondent has provided the following types of school-related information: His current school enrollment status, the grade he currently attends, the highest grade he has completed, the date he received a high school diploma or equivalent, whether he had ever attended college, the type of college degree he earned, the type of his high school and college curricula, his college field of study, the type(s) of financial assistance he received, college tuition amounts he paid, the type of school (public or private) he attended, and the geographic location of each school he attended.

During 1968, a special set of questions gathered information from the respondent about his experiences in high school and college. Details include his participation in high

school extracurricular activities, the amount of time he spent on homework, the high school subjects he liked and disliked, and his overall attitude toward his high school years. Those who had attended college answered questions on the college fields of study they liked and disliked, their attitude toward their college years, and their educational aspirations.

Multiple surveys collected data on the educational aspirations and expectations of the Young Men. Available information includes the number of years of education the respondent desired; the college degree he desired; the years of education he expected; and, for each respondent who planned on attending college, the type of college he expected to attend, his intended field of study, and his expected responsibility for expenses.

A separate school survey mailed directly to each school in 1968 collected information on the secondary schools attended by respondents in this cohort. Data included characteristics of the school (for example, type of school, student enrollment by grade, expenditures per pupil, number of books in the library) and characteristics of the school's teachers and counselors (number of teachers and counselors, salaries, and so forth). A set of constructed variables summarizes attributes, such as the ratio of students to teachers, and provides an index of overall school quality.

The school survey also recorded respondents' grade point averages and individual test scores from instruments such as the *Otis/Beta/Gamma*, *California Test of Mental Maturity*, *Lorge-Thorndike Intelligence Test*, and the *Scholastic Aptitude Test* (available for select respondents). An "IQ score" created from these data is available for more than 3,300 Young Men respondents. Finally, the school survey collected information about respondents' behaviors in school in regard to absenteeism, disciplinary actions, and so on.

### 5. Military experiences

**Older Men.** The data set makes available a limited amount of information on respondents' military service. The 1967 and 1976 surveys asked whether a respondent had ever served in the Armed Forces. Those who had served provided information on the general period(s) of service (for example, during World War II, peacetime before 1950) in the 1967 survey; the 1976 survey gathered start and stop dates for up to two periods of active duty. The initial survey collected information on the respondent's participation in vocational training while in the Armed Forces. The final four surveys of the Older Men asked about income from Armed Forces pensions.

**Young Men.** Multiple surveys sought information on the military experiences of respondents in this cohort. The survey first asked whether the respondent had ever served in the Armed Forces. If he had, follow-up questions determined the branch in which he served, the rank he held,

whether he had enlisted or been drafted, and the number of months he spent on active duty. Training questions asked about the kinds of training he received, the length of his training, and whether the skills he acquired were used in a recent job. The military occupation he held for the longest time, whether he felt that his military service helped or hurt his career, and the date he separated from active duty also were determined. In addition, the 1967–71 surveys asked all age-eligible respondents for their current draft classification and, if applicable, the reason for their 1-Y or 4-F rejection.

### 6. Retirement plans and experiences

**Older Men.** The retirement plans, expectations, and experiences of the Older Men constituted an important part of each interview's data collection. Surveys regularly asked about each respondent's retirement plans and expectations, including the age at which he expected to stop working, whether a compulsory retirement plan would require him to stop working at a given age, what that age was, and whether he would work longer if he could. The respondent also provided information about the types of activities he expected to engage in after retirement, his attitudes toward work and retirement, his eligibility for Social Security or other pension benefits, the specific characteristics of the employer pension plan for which he was eligible, and the total income he expected during retirement.

Details on the respondent's retirement experiences include information on whether he had ever retired voluntarily or involuntarily from a regular job, the date and reason, any ways in which the respondent's employer encouraged the retirement decision, and whether the respondent would have continued to work either full or part time had the employer allowed. The surveys also determined the respondent's attitude toward and satisfaction with his retirement and asked about the specific retirement or leisure activities in which he had engaged over the previous 12 months. Finally, this section of the survey covered the respondent's residential moves since retirement; the proximity of and assistance received from his network of friends, relatives, and area community service agencies; and household income received from pensions, Social Security or Railroad Retirement, and disability. Every survey of this cohort has included "retired" as a reason for not being in the labor force during the survey week.

### 7. Volunteer work and leisure-time activities

**Older Men.** Certain surveys of the Older Men collected information on how the respondent had spent his leisure time during the previous year. These surveys recorded whether the respondent had participated in leisure-time activities such as sports, reading books, pursuing hobbies, visiting friends or relatives, maintaining a home, attending

the theater, performing volunteer work, or taking trips. They also determined the extent of his participation in these activities.

### 8. *Income and assets*

**Older and Young Men.** The surveys regularly asked about the total income received by the respondent's family during the past year and about the amount of income received from various sources during that period by the respondent himself, his spouse, or other family members. Income sources include wages and salary, business and farm income, unemployment compensation, rental income, interest and dividends, Social Security, disability payments, public assistance, Food Stamps, pension benefits (Older Men), and child support and alimony (Young Men).

A series of questions on family assets and debts collected details on: (1) Whether the respondent and his spouse owned their own home, other types of real estate, or automobiles and, if so, the total market value and amount owed on each; (2) the value of other assets, such as savings accounts, U.S. Savings Bonds, stocks or bonds, and personal loans; and (3) whether there were other personal debts such as money owed to stores, physicians, hospitals, or banks. In 1967, 1969, 1971, and 1990, the Older Men stated whether they believed that their overall financial position was better, worse, or about the same as it was a few years earlier; respondents in the Young Men cohort answered the same question in 1967 through 1971.

### 9. *Physical well-being, healthcare, and health insurance*

**Older Men.** A comprehensive set of health-related variables is available for respondents in the Older Men cohort. This data collection includes information on the respondent's health status, perceived changes in his health over time, types of health-related problems and specific health conditions he has experienced, hospitalizations or medical care he has received, and characteristics of his health insurance coverage. Respondents also stated whether their health limited or prohibited working and whether any health problems were the result of work-related accidents. Respondents surveyed in 1973 and 1990 also reported their height and weight.

Two separate series of questions have asked Older Men respondents to evaluate their health. The first, fielded during seven surveys, asked each respondent to rate his health as excellent, good, fair, or poor when compared to the health of his male peers. The second, included in six surveys, determined the respondent's general satisfaction with his health condition.

During 1971, 1976, 1981, and 1990, respondents stated whether they had experienced certain health-related prob-

lems such as pain, fatigue, weakness, fainting spells or dizziness, anxiety or depression, or shortness of breath. A second series of questions, fielded during the same surveys, asked the respondent whether he ever had any difficulty performing a predetermined set of activities, such as walking, using stairs, or standing for long periods of time.

Each survey (except 1968) collected information on the respondent's health limitations and their impact on the kind or amount of work that he could do. A supplemental series of questions, fielded during 1966, 1969, 1976, 1981, and 1990, asked the respondent whether his health had prevented him from working altogether. The 1976 survey determined whether any of the respondent's reported health problems were the result of an accidental injury and whether the most serious injury had occurred on the job.

In the 1990 survey, respondents reported specific health conditions they had experienced during the 12-month period before the interview. This survey gathered information on whether the respondent needed help with activities such as bathing, dressing, walking, shopping for personal items, or managing money; it also asked who helped him complete each activity.

Two surveys collected details on the respondent's use of the medical system. The 1981 survey included a series of questions on the respondent's use of emergency medical assistance. The 1990 survey asked respondents and widows of deceased respondents for information regarding hospitalizations, care by a physician, and residency in a nursing or convalescent home during the past 12 months or during the 12 months before the respondent's death.

The 1981 and 1990 surveys asked whether the respondent and his spouse were covered by health insurance. Further questions recorded the types of insurance (for example, Medicare, veterans' benefits) for which each was eligible.

For all interviews except the 1990 survey, the life status of respondents at the time of the interview is indicated by the designation "deceased" as the reason for noninterview. In the 1990 survey, age at death and cause of death are available for sample members whom the Census Bureau believed to be deceased. For these sample members, the Census Bureau obtained death certificates from State vital records departments and recorded information on up to four contributing causes of death. These administrative data supplement the cause of death information on 2,166 deceased respondents that was collected directly from the widows or other family members surveyed in 1990.

**Young Men.** Data include information on perceived changes in the respondent's health status over time, the types of health-related problems he experienced, whether any of his health problems was the result of a work-related accident, and whether he worked in an unhealthy or dangerous environment.

At three survey points, respondents stated whether they considered their health to have changed over the past few years. Height and weight measurements of respondents interviewed during 1973 also are available. The 1971, 1976, and 1981 surveys asked whether the respondent had experienced certain health-related problems such as pain, tiring easily, weakness, or shortness of breath. A second series, fielded in the same surveys, asked the respondent whether he ever had any difficulty performing a predetermined set of activities such as walking, using stairs, standing for long periods, stooping, lifting heavy weights, or reaching. Multiple surveys asked whether the respondent's health condition limited his work or prevented him from working and, if it did, how long he had experienced that restriction. The 1976 survey determined whether any of the reported health problems was the result of an accidental injury and whether the most serious injury had occurred on the job.

Both the regularly fielded health series and selected administrations of a set of job satisfaction questions have addressed other health issues related to the respondent's job and general working conditions. At multiple survey points, respondents identified one or more specific characteristics of their workplace that they would have trouble working around because of their health. The 1978 and 1981 surveys included a series of descriptive statements about the working conditions associated with the respondent's current job.

For all interviews, the life status of respondents at the time of the interview is indicated by a designation of "deceased" as the reason for noninterview.

#### 10. Alcohol and cigarette use

**Older Men.** The 1990 survey collected information on the frequency and quantity of respondents' alcohol consumption in the past 12 months. If the respondent had consumed at least 12 drinks during adulthood, he provided data on his lifetime consumption of alcohol. Similar information was supplied by the widows or other family members of those respondents who were deceased.

The 1990 survey also collected information from both respondents and widows on the respondent's current and past use of cigarettes. This series included data on the age at which the respondent had started smoking regularly, the age at which he had last smoked regularly, and the number of cigarettes he smoked on an average day.

#### 11. Attitudes, aspirations, and psychological well-being

**Older Men.** A collection of attitude, aspiration, and psychological well-being variables is available for this cohort. The Older Men responded to selected administrations of the

*Center for Epidemiological Studies Depression (CES-D) Scale* (Radloff, 1977), the *Internal-External Locus of Control Scale* (Rotter, 1966), the *Short Portable Mental Status Questionnaire* (Pfeiffer, 1975), and the *Bradburn Affect Balance Scale* (Bradburn, 1969). Periodic questions also investigated the respondent's attitude toward his current job, women working, various life events, and life in general.

**Young Men.** Members of this cohort also responded to a variety of attitude, aspiration, and psychological well-being questions. Information from the *Internal-External Locus of Control Scale* (Rotter, 1966) is available for the Young Men, as are answers to periodic questions gathering information about the respondent's general knowledge of the world of work; his educational and occupational aspirations; and his attitudes toward his current job, women working, and life in general.

#### 12. Geographic and environmental data

**Older and Young Men.** Three sets of variables provide information on the respondent's current residence. The first set broadly defines the geographic area in which the respondent resided at the time of the interview. This definition includes the name of the census division (New England, Middle Atlantic, Pacific, and so forth), whether the respondent's region of residence was located in the South or a non-South region of the United States, and whether his residence was in a metropolitan statistical area. In addition, the 1990 survey of the Older Men collected information about a second residence of the respondent.

The second set of variables compares the respondent's current State or metropolitan statistical area with those of his previous residence, the location of his current job, and his birthplace. A third series of variables details characteristics of the respondent's environment, including the size of the labor force and the unemployment rate for the labor market of the respondent's current residence.

**Research Data Centers.** Geographic information collected during interviews with the Older Men and Young Men is available for research use at the Census Bureau's Research Data Centers. The cohort-specific files contain the respondent identification number, survey year, and State code. Researchers may match these files with the NLS data sets. The Research Data Centers have available, by survey year, the Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) State codes, which represent the State of residence for each interviewed respondent. Having the State variables allows researchers to determine the census regions and divisions. Variables also are available on the county of residence.

The Census Bureau developed the Research Data Centers to give researchers access to valuable data in a setting



designed to safeguard respondent confidentiality. Researchers interested in more detailed information on the procedures to follow in applying for access to a Research Data Center should see the NLS Web site at [www.bls.gov/nls](http://www.bls.gov/nls).

### *13. Demographics, family background, and household composition*

**Older and Young Men.** The surveys have collected data regarding each respondent's race, nationality, date of birth, age, and residential community at age 15 (Older Men) or age 14 (Young Men). Background information on the families of respondents includes the birthplace of the respondent's parents and grandparents, the relationship of the respondent to the person(s) with whom he lived at age 14 or 15, the occupation and highest grade completed by his father or the head of his household, and the life status of both the respondent's parents and his wife's parents.

Each interview collected detailed information on the composition of the respondent's household. For as many as 20 family members (during the early survey years) or household members (later survey years) who were living in the respondent's household at the time of the survey, data include the individual's relationship to the respondent, age or date of birth, occupation, current school enrollment status, highest grade of school attended, whether that grade was completed, and the number of weeks and hours per week the individual worked in the past year.

### *14. Marital history, children, and dependents*

**Older and Young Men.** Every survey except the 1968 mail survey for the Older Men asked about the respondent's current marital status. Selected interviews collected information on the timing of marital transitions.

The 1981 survey of Young Men included a series of questions on the type and timing of up to four marital changes the respondent had experienced since he was last interviewed. During the 1990 interview of Older Men, widows of deceased respondents provided information on their current marital status; their marital status at the time of the respondent's death; the date of their marriage to the respondent; and the date of their most recent marriage, divorce, or widowhood.

Data on the children or dependents of Older and Young Men include the respondent's total number of children; the number of his children (under age 18) who lived in the household; and, for each child living in the household at the survey date, the child's age, date of birth, and whether the child was the respondent's son or daughter. Surveys after 1978 for the Older Men and after 1976 for the Young Men asked whether the child was an adopted, step-, or foster child. Selected surveys also determined the respondent's relation-

ship to each child living outside of the household.

On a regular basis, the interviews gathered information on the number of the respondent's dependents, excluding his wife. Selected surveys provided details on the number and relationship of dependents who lived outside the respondent's household. Questions in the 1981 survey of Older Men asked for information about whether the respondent's children were currently dependent upon him or likely to become dependent upon him in the future.

The 1990 survey of Older Men updated this information on the respondent's children and dependents. Details include the number of living children of the respondent, the number of dependent sons and daughters, the number of children residing with the respondent, and the number of living children not residing in the respondent's household.

In 1981, the Young Men answered a set of questions on the number of children the respondent considered ideal, the number he wanted to have, and when he expected his next child to be born.

### *15. Household chores*

**Young Men.** The 1981 survey collected information on the total number of hours per week the respondent usually spent performing household chores and the frequency with which he performed specific tasks such as cooking, washing laundry, grocery shopping, or caring for young children.

### **Data files and documentation**

The NLS of Older Men (1966–90) and the NLS of Young Men (1966–81) data set contains the longitudinal record of each respondent, as well as information from the 1968 school survey. Included are: (1) Raw responses to the questions administered during the 1966–90 surveys of Older Men and the 1966–81 surveys of Young Men; (2) a series of edited and created variables based on these raw responses; (3) selected demographic, household, and residential data provided by the Census Bureau from its administrative records; (4) death certificate data obtained in 1990 from State vital records departments (Older Men only); and (5) respondent- and school-specific information gathered during the separately administered 1968 survey of the high schools attended by respondents in the Young Men cohort.

Like those for the other NLS cohorts, the Older and Young Men data set is available for download at the [www.bls.gov/nls](http://www.bls.gov/nls) Web site. The files include documentation and are accompanied by search and extraction software that enables users to easily peruse, select, and extract variables. Chapter 8 provides more technical information on the NLS data format and extraction software, as well as descriptions of supplementary documentation items available for the NLS of Older and Young Men.

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**Selected variables by cohort and year: Older and Young Men**

Tables 6.4 and 6.5 depict selected variables from the main data files of the NLS of Older and Young Men. The top row of the tables lists the years in which the men have been surveyed; the first column gives some of the variables that have been collected. An asterisk (\*) indicates that information for the designated variable was obtained for the cohort in the year indicated. "R" used in variable descriptions stands for "respondent." Users should be aware that, in some instances, the variable descriptions in the tables represent a group of questions and not single response items. In 1990, the interviews of widows of the original Older Men respondents included questions about the respondent and also about the situation of the widow; both sets of questions are reflected in the table.



**Table 6.4. Selected Older Men variables by survey year: Respondents ages 45 to 59 in 1966**

Variable	66	67	68	69	71	73	75	76	78	80	81	83	90	90 widow	90 widow report on spouse
<b>B. Migration</b>															
Years at current residence	*												*		
Comparison of birthplace to current residence	*														
Geographic mobility (details vary)		*		*	*			*				*	*		*
Part-year residence													*		
<b>C. Education</b>															
Highest grade completed	*							*							
High school curriculum	*														
College (year last attended, earned degree, highest degree received)								*							
<b>D. Training outside regular school</b>															
Has R taken, type	*	*		*	*			*				*			
Sponsor of training		*		*	*			*				*			
Duration	*	*		*	*			*				*			
Hours per week attended		*		*	*			*				*			
Did R complete	*	*		*	*			*				*			
Reason decided to take		*		*	*			*				*			
Does R use training on current job	*	*		*	*			*				*			
<b>E. Health and physical condition</b>															
Self-rating of health	*			*					*	*	*	*	*		
Comparison of R's condition with past		*			*			*	*	*	*	*			
Attitude toward health condition								*	*	*	*	*	*		
Does health limit work	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*		
Duration of health limitations	*			*	*			*				*	*		
Uses glasses, hearing aid, other special equipment													*		
Problematic activities and working conditions					*			*				*	*		
Types of special health problems in past 12 months													*		
Medical care (eligibility for insurance benefits)												*			
Type and cost of health insurance coverage for R and for his wife													*		
Accidents (on-the-job, how, when)								*							
Are R and his wife able to go outdoors, use public transportation, or do personal care without help					*			*				*	*		
Assistance needed by R and his wife in daily living													*		
Height, weight						*							*		



**Table 6.4. Selected Older Men variables by survey year: Respondents ages 45 to 59 in 1966**

Variable	66	67	68	69	71	73	75	76	78	80	81	83	90	90 widow	90 widow report on spouse
Income from farm or business	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Wage or salary income	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Unemployment compensation income	*	*		*	*			*			*	*	*	*	
Income from supplemental unemployment benefits								*			*		*	*	
Income from rent, interest, or dividends	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Public assistance income	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Disability income	*	*		*	*			*			*		*	*	
SSI income								*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Total market value of Food Stamps received	*	*		*	*			*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Social Security income, pension income	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Insurance income														*	
Amount of financial assistance received from others									*	*	*	*	*	*	
Income from other sources	*	*		*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	
Sources and amounts of widow's death benefits														*	
Evaluation of overall financial situation													*	*	
<b>H. Military service</b>															
Dates of service								*							
<b>I. Attitudes/perspectives</b>															
How does R feel about job	*	*		*	*			*		*	*	*	*	*	
Evaluation of total work career													*		
What R likes best and least about job	*	*		*	*										
Would R continue to work if had enough money to live on	*									*					
What is more important: high wages or liking work	*														
Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control score				*	*			*			*				
Attitude toward women working		*			*										
Attitude toward R's marriage													*		
Attitudes toward selected aspects of life								*	*	*	*	*	*		
Pfeiffer cognitive functioning scale													*	*	
CES-Depression Scale													*		
Bradburn Affect Balance Scale											*	*	*		
Discrimination (R ever experienced, type, way in which experienced)				*				*		*					
Has R progressed, held own, or moved backward				*				*							
Have job pressures increased, decreased, or remained the same				*				*							









**Table 6.5. Selected Young Men variables by survey year: Respondents ages 14 to 24 in 1966**

Variable	66	67	68	69	70	71	73	75	76	78	80	81
Family members: Relationship to R, age, sex, education, employment status	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Unrelated household members: Relationship to R, sex, age										*	*	*
Household activities (responsibility for, hours per week spent on)												*
<b>G. Financial characteristics</b>												
Total net family assets	*				*	*			*			*
Total family income	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Income from farm or business	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Wages or salary income	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Unemployment compensation income	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Income from supplemental unemployment benefits									*			*
Disability income												*
Rental income												*
Interest income												*
Total market value of Food Stamps received										*	*	*
Income from AFDC/TANF												*
Income from public assistance										*	*	*
Amount of financial assistance received from others	*	*	*	*	*	*			*	*	*	*
Income from other sources	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>H. Military service</b>												
Ever served in	*			*	*	*			*	*	*	*
Branch of Armed Forces served in	*			*		*			*			*
Months spent in Armed Forces	*			*		*			*			*
Military occupation held longest	*			*		*			*			*
How entered Armed Forces	*			*		*			*			*
Did military service help/hurt career						*			*			*
Rank held in Armed Forces				*		*			*			*
Primary training received (did R complete, duration, type, used on job)	*			*		*			*			*
GI (VA) benefits (ever used, type)									*			*
Draft (classification, reason rejected)		*	*	*	*	*						
Disability (discharged for, service-connected, compensation rating)									*			*
<b>I. Attitudes/perspectives</b>												
How does R feel about job	*	*	*	*	*	*				*	*	*
What R likes best and least about job	*	*	*	*	*	*				*	*	*
Facet-Specific Job Satisfaction Index										*		*
Would R continue to work if he had enough money to live on				*		*						*
What is more important:, high wages or liking work	*											
Would R like to receive more education or training	*	*	*	*	*	*			*			

