



U.S. Department of Labor  
Bureau of Labor Statistics

### Release of the 1998 NLSY79 Data

The 1998 main and geocode versions of the NLSY79 data are currently available from the Bureau of Labor Statistics; work history data will be released in January 2000. The data are available on compact discs and include information gathered during all 18 interviews conducted since 1979.

During the latest survey, information was collected from 8,399 members of the NLSY79 cohort, or 84.3 percent of the respondents remaining eligible for interview. The 1998 survey repeated all core NLSY79 modules. As it has each year, this survey contained a detailed labor force section based on the Current Population Survey (CPS). In addition, respondents who reported working since the date of last interview completed a questionnaire on each employer in the employer supplements. The 1998 survey also continued modules on education, fertility, childcare, income, assets, program participation, and training.

There were, however, some changes between the 1996 and 1998 surveys. Questions were added to the marriage section to collect information about the number of marriages a respondent's spouse has had and the quality of the respondent's relationships. The 1998 survey also included a self-administered drug supplement that asked about use of cigarettes, marijuana, cocaine, crack cocaine, sedatives, and barbiturates.

The largest addition to the 1998 survey was a series of health questions for respondents age 40 and older. This section asked a series of questions about the following:

- The health and life status of the respondent's parents
- The respondent's general perception of his or her health

- The respondent's emotional health in the past 4 weeks
- Whether health status interfered with daily activities
- Whether the respondent has various health problems, such as heart problems, cancer, diabetes, etc.
- How much time is spent on health care activities
- Whether the respondent has problems with eyesight or hearing

These new health questions provide researchers with baseline information about respondents' health as respondents approach middle age.

**Interviewer effects.** Many researchers are interested in knowing whether—or how much—interviewers affect respondents' answers. To enable researchers to investigate these questions, the 1998 NLSY79 data release, for the first time, contains additional information about interviewers. This new set of variables presents information on each interviewer's characteristics and enables researchers to link the interviewers to specific respondents. Information on the characteristics of NLSY79 interviewers comes from the National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) interviewer characteristic files, which are called the ISIS database.

These new interviewer variables are currently provided for survey years 1979–96; 1998 data will be included on the 2000 data release. The following ISIS variables are available: Interviewer ID; the number of times this interviewer has already interviewed the respondent; the interviewer's race, sex, age, and educational level; the amount of time the interviewer has worked at NORC; any languages other than English spoken by the interviewer; a flag identifying if the interviewer was ever ter-

minated; and the last known pay rate (in U.S. dollars per hour) for the interviewer. For surveys from 1981 to 1985, two additional variables are available: the number of NORC surveys the interviewer worked on during the calendar year and the number of hours spent interviewing during the calendar year.

(Researchers should consult appendix 17 in the *NLSY79 Codebook Supplement* for more information on ISIS data.)

**CD-ROMs and documentation.** The 1998 NLSY79 data are presented on three separate CD-ROM sets. In addition to the data, each CD-ROM contains documentation and search and retrieval software. The NLSY79 1979–98 main file two-disk set includes the data collected in the 1998 survey described above, as well as a number of other created variables. This file also contains all data and created variables from previous survey rounds, so researchers can easily examine the longitudinal record of a respondent.

The geocode CD set contains the same survey data and created variables as the main file for all survey rounds, and it also holds detailed geographic data describing the respondents' residences. Access to this sensitive information is restricted; NLS researchers must satisfactorily complete an accessing agreement and follow security procedures as outlined by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Interested researchers should contact Rita Jain at BLS for details. (See the back page of this newsletter for contact information.)

Finally, the NLSY79 work history CD summarizes the work experiences of NLSY79 respondents from January 1, 1978, through the 1998 interview date. The week-by-week longitudinal work record for each respondent is arranged into three separate arrays, providing information

about the respondent's labor force status, dual job status, and hours worked. The CD also contains job-specific data, such as industry and occupation for up to five jobs for each respondent, as well as identification variables, so researchers can link work history data to the respondent's main file record. The work history file is now a single CD.

Supplemental documents, such as questionnaires and interviewer reference manuals, are distributed with each CD-ROM. Also available to researchers is the 1999 edition of the *NLSY79 User's Guide*. This guide explains the selection of the NLSY79 sample, describes the contents of the data set, and provides helpful information for researchers using the data. The 1999 edition updates the previous NLSY79 guide with information about the 1998 survey and includes new topical sections on health, fertility, and item nonresponse.

Researchers interested in purchasing the main file data, work history CD, *NLSY79 User's Guide*, or any accompanying documentation should contact NLS User Services. As mentioned above, users interested in the geocode CD-ROM should contact Rita Jain at BLS. Contact information for both NLS User Services and BLS is provided on the back of this newsletter. □

### Spouse/Partner History for Male NLSY79 Respondents

Now available to users are data on the marital and cohabitation histories of male NLSY79 respondents. This supplemental file is available at no charge on a diskette that can be linked to the NLSY79 main data file. This information is currently provided for spouses and opposite-sex partners only.

This new data set permits users to track partner and spouse continuity across survey rounds. The file is constructed so researchers can identify whether a given male respondent is living with the same opposite-sex partner or spouse as at any other interview date, or whether a new partner or spouse is present. In addition to providing a simple count of the number of spouses and opposite-sex partners, these data permit researchers to examine the length and continuity of relationships. The marital or cohabitation history data can also be connected to information (e.g., educa-

tion, employment, age) collected during the regular interviews about each spouse or partner.

Users should note, however, that the data are based only on spouses or partners actually residing with a respondent at the time of an interview. If a respondent began and ended a marriage or cohabitation period between surveys, that spouse or partner will not appear in this data file. Preliminary investigations by survey staff indicate that only a modest number of relationships are missed in this way. Some information about spouses who enter and exit between rounds can be found by examining the marital history and transition questions asked during each interview.

This spouse and partner history was constructed through examination of the name of the respondent's spouse or partner at each survey date. Names of members of the respondent's household are confidential and not released to the public. This special data set, which replaces names with identification numbers, allows us to provide information about relationship continuity patterns, without violating confidentiality constraints.

In addition to the spouse and partner data, a supplementary roommate file identifies female adults of the opposite sex who were not partners or spouses at particular survey points but who did appear as a spouse or partner for at least one survey point. To date, these household residents have included in-laws, boarders, and various other unrelated adults. This additional file enables researchers to build a more detailed picture of a respondent's residential history. □

### Child and Young Adult 1998 Preliminary Data Release

The 1998 NLSY79 child and young adult *preliminary* data release is now available. This CD-ROM contains the unedited child and young adult data collected in 1998. It also provides the full set of 1998 child assessment scores and child sampling weights, as well as copies of the field instruments used in the collection of the data. The preliminary release does not include information from any of the rounds preceding 1998. However, extracts can be linked to prior rounds of main NLSY79 or child or young adult data.

The 1998 child sample includes all children under age 21, born to interviewed NLSY79 female respondents, who were either assessed or interviewed in 1998. Information about 4,924 children under the age of 15 (as of December 31, 1998) was collected in the child and mother supplements, similar to the instruments used since 1986. In 1998, some 2,143 young adults (ages 15 to 20) completed an NLSY79-style interview asking about their social, economic, demographic, and psychological attitudes, attributes, and behaviors.

The final 1986-98 NLSY79 child and young adult CD, including all data from previous rounds, will be available in the spring of 2000. The final release will contain a wide range of created variables; accompanying documentation will include a user's guide and a set of young adult appendixes. A document entitled *The 1998 NLSY79 Child Assessments: Selected Tables* is currently available in paper form from NLS User Services.

The preliminary release is available from NLS User Services. (See the back of this newsletter for contact information.) □

### Using the NLSY97 Household and Non-Resident Rosters

Round 1 of the NLSY97 survey included the administration of three separate survey instruments in the respondent's household: The screener, household roster, and non-resident roster questionnaire; the youth questionnaire; and the parent questionnaire. This survey design resulted in the collection of a large amount of valuable data about the members of the youth respondent's household and certain non-resident relatives of the youth. However, the existence of three separate instruments and the fact that they may have been administered to three different household members makes using these data a complex task. Understanding the way the data were collected and organized into rosters is the key to effective research based on the roster data.

This article first defines a number of important concepts related to the collection of household and non-resident relative information in round 1. It then describes the types of relationship and household data collected and explains how to use these

variables to examine characteristics of household members and non-resident relatives. Finally, it discusses how researchers can tie together information from the various instruments and across survey rounds.

### Definitions

Most household information was collected during the administration of the screener, household roster, and non-resident roster questionnaire. This instrument, which was used to identify youths eligible for the NLSY97, gathered information about each household resident. This part of the survey also asked questions about certain non-resident relatives of the NLSY97-eligible youths, including biological, step-, and adoptive parents and biological children. An adult household member, referred to as the household informant, answered the questions in this section of the NLSY97.

During the course of the computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI), a number of rosters, or matrices of data, are constructed. These rosters organize answers to one or more questions on a given subject. In the case of the screener, household roster, and non-resident roster questionnaire, rosters are used to organize information collected from the household informant. Researchers can then use the information on the rosters in their analyses.

The matrices of data are also used later during the interview itself. Rosters are often presented to the interviewers as lists of information that are used to verify data. For example, the youth roster (information about the respondent collected during the screener interview) is used during the youth survey to verify that the information is accurate. Rosters may also be used as a choice list from which one of the subjects on the roster is chosen as the answer to a survey question. For example, respondents who reported an internship during administration of the youth questionnaire were presented with a list of employers they had already reported and asked to choose the one with whom they served the internship.

Two rosters were created during the administration of the round 1 screener, household roster, and non-resident roster questionnaire. The first, the household roster, includes information for all current residents of the respondent's permanent household. For easy identification on the CD-ROM, all elements of the household roster were assigned question names that

begin with *HHI2\_*. (The HHI2 roster was actually the second sort of this information; a preliminary first sort, HHI1, contains no additional information and is not released to the public.) The second key roster is the non-resident roster, which presents information about certain non-resident relatives of the youth. All of the non-resident roster variables have question names that begin with *NONHHL\_*.

Using the screener data, two additional rosters were then created and transferred to the youth and parent questionnaires. The youth and parent rosters essentially modify the household and non-resident rosters with the NLSY97 youth respondent as the focus. For example, one item on both new rosters identifies the NLSY97 youth's biological mother. New rosters were created instead of simply reusing the HHI2 data, because there may be more than one youth and more than one responding parent in a given household. (See the *NLSY97 User's Guide* for details about multiple respondent households.)

The youth roster includes information specific to the NLSY97-eligible youth, as well as data collected regarding the youth's parents. Many of the roster items are later verified and corrected, if necessary, during the youth interview. All items on the youth roster have question names beginning with *YOUTH\_*. Similarly, the parent roster is created using screener, household roster, and non-resident roster questionnaire data about the youth respondent and the responding parent; it is updated during the parent interview. The question names of parent roster items begin with *PARYOUTH\_*. Users should note that this parent roster is created only if a parent interview is conducted.

Figure 1 provides a pictorial representation of how the rosters described above are created and used.

Users should be aware that much of the information contained in the rosters actually appears in the data set more than once. As figure 1 suggests, data will first be included at the point in the interview when the information was actually collected. For example, screener question SE-28 asked the household informant for the birth date of each household member. After all the data had been gathered, the computer sorted the answers and created the rosters described above. The date of birth information collected in SE-28, for example, is

now located in the *HHI2\_DOB.xx* questions in the household roster. If there were errors in the original answers and the youth respondent or responding parent provided corrected information, the roster items were often changed to reflect the up-to-date information. However, the original answers to the survey questions—the raw data—remain uncorrected.

Survey staff strongly recommend that researchers use the roster information whenever possible, as it is corrected and easier to use than the raw data. Roster items can be identified through their unique question names as described above. The primary area of interest for these variables is called roster item and (*ROS ITEM*) appears in the variable titles.

### Using the household roster

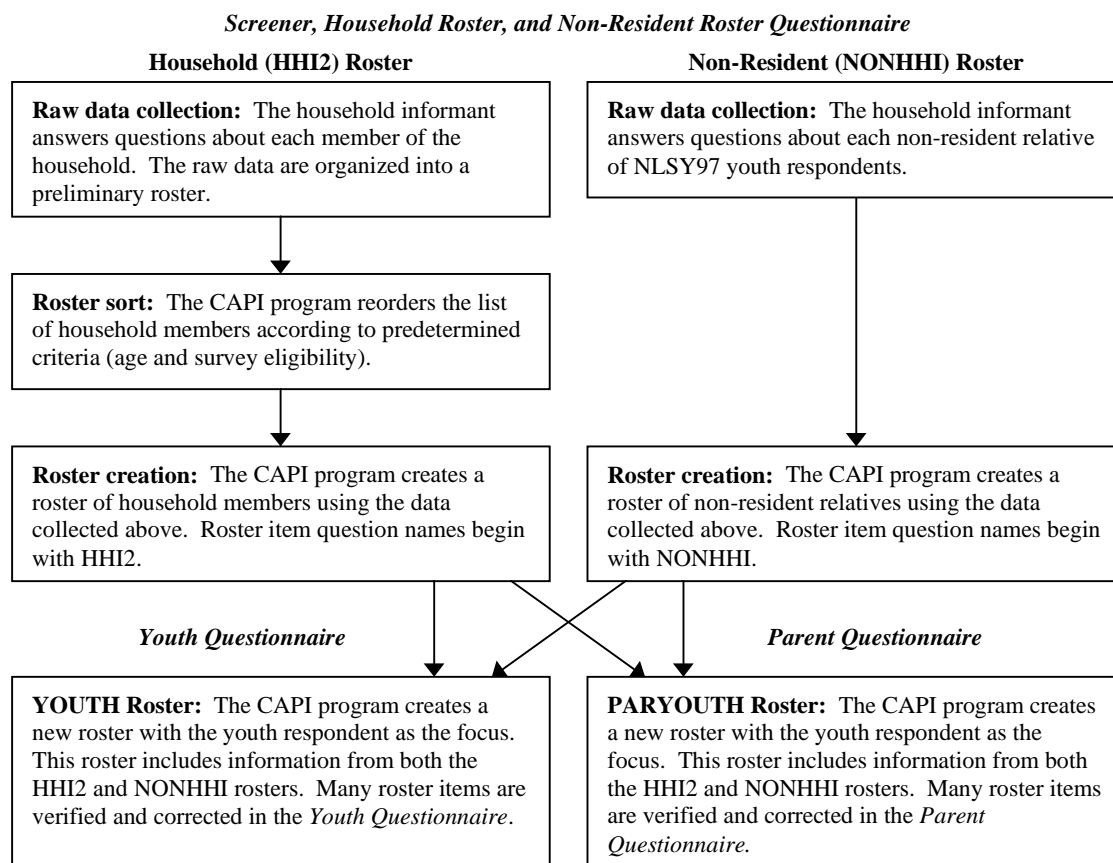
The rosters organize large amounts of data for use by researchers. The following types of information are contained in the household roster:

- Age, date of birth, gender, race, ethnicity, employment status, enrollment status, highest grade completed, and marital status of each household member
- The relationship of each household member to all other household members
- ID number of each household member (line number on the round 1 household roster)
- Unique ID number of each household member (for linking across survey rounds)
- Flags indicating whether each household member is eligible to participate in the survey or the related *ASVAB* administration (See chapter 3 of the *NLSY97 User's Guide*.)
- A flag indicating whether a given household member was the household informant
- Variables linking the household member ID from the HHI2 roster to the household member's position in the pre-sorted raw data

The size of the household roster is determined by the NLSY97 household with the largest number of residents and is not limited to any specific number by the survey program. In round 1, up to 16 residents are presented on the household roster.

A key variable in the household roster is the ID number of the household member

**Figure 1. Creation of rosters based on NLSY97 screener data**



(HHI2\_ID.xx). The .xx indicates that this variable is repeated for each household member, beginning with HHI2\_ID.01, HHI2\_ID.02, and so on. This variable identifies the line number of the household member on the HHI2 roster. For example, if the NLSY97-eligible youth is listed first on the roster (that is, has a value of 1 for the variable HHI2\_ID.01), then all other HHI2 variables that refer to household member 1 contain information about the youth. If the youth's father is second on the roster, or has a value of 2 for the variable HHI2\_ID.02, then his information is presented in the HHI2 variables referring to household member 2.

Users should be aware that the ID numbers were assigned in a specific order. The household informant reported information about household members in no particular order. After the raw data were collected, the youths eligible for the survey were placed at the top of the list of residents. If there was more than one eligible youth, they are listed from oldest to youngest. No house-

hold has more than five youth respondents, so no youth respondent has a household ID number higher than 5. After listing the NLSY97-eligible youths, the CAPI program sorted everyone else in the household from oldest to youngest. Therefore, if an older relative, such as a grandparent, lived in the household, he or she will be listed next, followed in most cases by the youth's parents, and then any siblings not eligible for the survey. Any other household members will be mingled with parents and siblings according to their ages.

The relationship variables on the household roster provide information about the relationship of every household member to every other household member. For example, consider a household with three members: The respondent (ID number 1), his father (ID number 3), and his grandmother (ID number 2). The resulting relationship variables are depicted in table 1.

By examining the relationship variables, researchers can identify all people in the household with a particular relationship

to the NLSY97 youth respondent or to each other. For example, a user might want to count the number of resident siblings of the NLSY97 youth respondent. After identifying which household member is the youth respondent (described in the final section of this article), the user can look at each of the relationship variables for that member and see which have a code of brother or sister. If the youth respondent has an ID number of 1, the researcher would write a program that checked the variables for the relationship of member 1 to member 2, member 1 to member 3, member 1 to member 4, and so on. Each member with a code of 13 (sister) or 14 (brother) is a full biological sibling of the youth respondent.

Researchers should note that the relationship codes in the household roster have been substantially revised since the release of the round 1 data. Relationships involving NLSY97 youth respondents were given top priority; some relationships between other household members were updated in the process. Survey staff place greater con-

confidence in the accuracy of codes for relationships involving youth respondents than for those involving other household members. The new household relationship data are now available as an ASCII file and will be included on the next data release. It is important to note that the variables are **not** provided in the same order in the ASCII file as they were on the original CD; researchers should be careful to match up the question names before proceeding with analysis. To obtain these data, contact NLS User Services, or consult issue 99 of the *NLS News* for more information.

In addition to relationship codes for each member of the household, the household roster includes variables that identify specific types of relationships among household members. For each household member, these variables provide the ID number of that person's biological mother, biological father, and spouse or partner if they also live in the household. However, survey staff strongly recommend that users create their own variables using the corrected relationship data. The corrected data are **not** reflected in the roster variables HHI2\_DADID.xx, HHI2\_MOMID.xx, HHI2\_SPOUSEID.xx, and HHI2\_PARTNERID.xx. (An update of these variables is planned for the next data release.)

### Using the non-resident roster

The non-resident roster is similar to—but somewhat simpler than—the household roster. Although the non-resident roster is not sorted in any particular manner, each

person about whom information is collected appears at the same point in the roster for each item. Thus, researchers can easily identify the key characteristics of a given non-resident relative.

Different types of information were collected about non-resident relatives, depending on their relationship to the youth. Tables in the *NLS Handbook* and the *NLSY97 User's Guide* provide information about the exact data available. Because the only relationship variable in this roster identifies the relationship of the non-resident to the youth, researchers do not need to go through the process necessary with the household roster to extract relationship information.

### Linking the rosters to other data

If researchers only want to investigate characteristics of household members or non-resident relatives, using the rosters simply requires examining the numbered variables related to the ID number of a given household member or non-resident. However, many research topics require linking variables from the household and non-resident rosters to other data collected during the parent and youth portions of the survey. The most common procedure is identification of the youth respondent, responding parent, and household informant.

The youth respondent can be identified by using R05334. (YOUTH\_ID.01). This variable provides the line number of the youth respondent on the round 1 household roster. For example, if the value of R05334. is 1, the youth's ID number for the house-

hold roster is 1. All information about household member 1 on the roster pertains to the youth. If the value of R05334. is 2, then HHI2 roster data about household member 2 pertains to the youth, and so on. As noted above, no NLSY97 youth respondent has an ID number higher than 5, so researchers who just want youth information will only need to examine data for the first five members on the household roster.

The parent roster (PARYOUTH) also contains a variable with the youth ID number on the household roster. However, researchers are advised to use the youth roster variable, because it was created during the youth interview.

Identification of the responding parent requires a similar process. Researchers should use variable R07350. (PARYOUTH\_PARENTID), which gives the ID number of the parent selected to be the responding parent at the end of the screener interview. This number can be used in the same way as the youth ID to examine information about the responding parent. However, this variable was not updated during the interview, if a different parent than the one originally selected responded to the survey. Researchers should obtain the updated version of PARYOUTH\_PARENTID, currently available on the NLS User Services ftp site. This variable is contained in the same ASCII file as the corrected relationship data mentioned above. (Contact NLS User Services or consult issue 99 of the *NLS News* for more information.)

Users should note that the youth roster also contains an ID variable called *ID of R 01 Resp Parent* identifying the parent selected to respond to the parent questionnaire at the end of the screener administration. However, because this variable is based solely on the screener and does not contain any updated information from the parent questionnaire, researchers are advised not to use this variable to identify the responding parent.

Finally, the household informant is fairly easy to identify. Variable R05381. (INFORMANT!ID) provides the identification number of the informant. As with the parent and the youth, this number is the position of the informant on the household (HHI2) roster.

Researchers often want to identify key relatives of the NLSY97 youth. For example, a user might want to determine

**Table 1. Example structure of the NLSY97 HHI2 relationship data**

Line (ID) number	1	2	3
1	HHI2_REL1.01 relationship of 1 to 1: sample member <sup>1</sup>	HHI2_REL1.02 relationship of 1 to 2: grandson	HHI2_REL1.03 relationship of 1 to 3: son
2	HHI2_REL2.01 relationship of 2 to 1: paternal grandmother	HHI2_REL2.02 relationship of 2 to 2: sample member <sup>1</sup>	HHI2_REL2.03 relationship of 2 to 3: mother
3	HHI2_REL3.01 relationship of 3 to 1: father	HHI2_REL3.02 relationship of 3 to 2: son	HHI2_REL3.03 relationship of 3 to 3: sample member <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Although the code indicates *sample member* due to programming considerations, these variables simply mean a relationship of *self*. This does **not** mean that all three household members are members of the NLSY97 sample, and these variables **cannot** be used to identify sample members.

which household member is the spouse or partner of the responding parent. Researchers should begin this process by identifying the ID number of the responding parent as described above. The next step is to look at the HHI2 relationship variables for that household member. Codes of 1 (wife), 2 (husband), and 69 (partner) indicate that a given household member is the responding parent's spouse or partner. For example, if the responding parent is number 3, the user would examine the variables for the relationship of member 3 to member 1 (HHI2\_REL3.01), member 3 to member 2 (HHI2\_REL3.02), member 3 to member 4 (HHI2\_REL3.04), and so on. If member 4 had a code of 2, then he would be the responding parent's husband.

Identifying the parents of the youth who were not responding parents requires a similar process. In this case, the researcher would first determine the ID number of the NLSY97 youth on the HHI2 roster and then examine the relationship variables for the youth. Codes 3-10 indicate various parental relationships. If the desired relationship is not found on the HHI2 roster, the next step is to examine the relationship variables on the non-resident (NONHHI) roster. For example, the youth's biological father may not reside in the household. None of the HHI2 relationship variables for the youth would have a code of 4, but one of the NONHHI relationship variables would have a value of 4. This person would be the youth's biological father.

Users should note that there are a number of ID variables in the round 1 data that identify the ID number of the youth's biological, adoptive, step-, or foster parents on the household and non-resident rosters (e.g., YOUTH\_ADOPTDADID.01, YOUTH\_NRMOMID.01). *However, these variables are based on the original relationship codes and have not been updated to reflect revised information.* Researchers using the round 1 data must create their own ID variables, using the process described above and the revised HHI2 relationship data available from NLS User Services. Survey staff plan to update these ID variables for the round 2 data release.

### Household information in future surveys

Many researchers want to examine changes in the youth's household over time. To facilitate this type of research, each NLSY97

survey will include questions about the members of the respondent's household. As in round 1, these data will be organized in a roster format.

During round 1, each member of the youth's household and person on the youth's non-resident roster was assigned a unique ID code that will remain constant across survey rounds. This ID code is different than the line number ID referred to throughout the rest of this article. Unique IDs are contained in questions HHI2\_UID.01-HHI2\_UID.16 on the round 1 household roster and NONHHI\_UID.01-NONHHI\_UID.23 on the round 1 non-resident roster. This unique ID code allows users to identify a given person in more than one survey round. □

### Little Known Variables in the NLS: Risk Tolerance

Knowing whether a person enjoys taking risks, is risk neutral, or avoids risks permits a deeper understanding of various labor market decisions. For example, individuals with a low tolerance for risk would probably seek out companies expected to have steadier long-term employment structures and stable income prospects, such as positions in government or with large corporations. Conversely, individuals with a high tolerance for risk would likely look for companies with less steady employment prospects but increased chances for high income, such as positions in start-up companies. Risk tolerance not only affects labor market choices; but it is also an influence in important decisions involving savings, fertility, and migration.

Respondents in both the NLSY79 and Children of the NLSY79 have answered questions regarding their tolerance for risk. This article examines these little-known and little-used risk tolerance questions.

**NLSY79.** In the 1993 NLSY79 survey, respondents were asked a series of questions (R43958. to R43960.) whose answers provide an indicator of the individual's level of risk tolerance. The first question asked the respondents to suppose they were the only one earning income in the family and that they held a good job that was guaranteed to give them their current income every year for life. Then, the respondents

were asked if they would take a new, equally good job if this new job had a 50-percent chance that it would double the family's income and a 50-percent chance that it would cut the family's income by one-third. If a respondent answered that he or she would take the new job, the second question repeated the choice. This time, however, the second part of the risk statement was a 50-percent chance the new job might cut income by half. Conversely, if the respondent answered that he or she would not take the original job offer, the proposal was presented again; this second question stated that the new job had a 50-percent chance it would cut income by a less-risky 20 percent.

Using these questions, the 8,958 respondents who answered this set of questions can be classified into 4 risk tolerance categories: None, low, medium, and high. Individuals who refused to accept any of the new job offers have no risk tolerance; more than 4,100 respondents fall into this category. Those willing to accept a potential cut in pay of only 20 percent, just over 1,000 respondents in 1993, have low-risk tolerance. Classified as having medium-risk tolerance are respondents who were willing to accept the chance of a 33-percent cut in pay but not a 50-percent cut; approximately 1,500 respondents answered in this manner. Finally, those willing to accept the possibility of a 50-percent cut in pay in exchange for a chance at doubling their salary, approximately 2,250 respondents, are categorized as having a high-risk tolerance.

**NLSY79 Children and Young Adults.** A different type of risk measurement is found in the questionnaires administered to the children of female NLSY79 respondents. In 1994, 1996, and 1998, risk measures were asked in both the young adult self-report booklet (for children ages 15 and older) and the child self-administered supplement (for those ages 10-14). In both questionnaires, six questions comprise the risk measure. Each question is answered by selecting one of four choices: Strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree.

The most direct question asks whether the respondent enjoys taking risks. Among the children ages 10-14 in 1996, 1,029 respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, compared to 656 who agreed or strongly agreed with it. How-

ever, the 1996 young adults showed a higher desire for risk, with 715 respondents agreeing and 779 disagreeing with the statement.

The other five questions explore areas that are highly related to risk. These questions are:

- Whether the respondent often gets into jams without thinking
- Whether the respondent believes that planning takes the fun out of things
- Whether the respondent needs a lot of self-control to keep out of trouble
- Whether the respondent enjoys new and exciting experiences, even if they are a little frightening or unusual
- Whether the respondent thinks that life with no danger in it would be too dull.

Combining the answers to all six questions can provide an indicator of the amount of risk taken and the amount of caution exercised by each child.

**For more information.** The risk tolerance variables in the NLSY79, NLSY79 children, and young adult surveys can be useful to researchers studying other topics, such as drug and alcohol use, that are often associated with risk-taking. An understanding of a respondent's risk tolerance may also provide insight into other individual choices, such as labor market activities, savings decisions, and family decisions. Interested users should contact NLS User Services to obtain data or documentation for this information. □

## Frequently Asked Questions

NLS User Services encourages researchers to contact them with questions and problems 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 are listed below with their answers. (These questions refer to NLSY79 data.)

*Q1: We want to create a cumulative measure of work experience through the years. We found the variables for weeks worked in 1975, 1976, and 1977 and for each interview year, but we could not find any information about weeks worked in 1978.*

*Where is this information located?*

A1: Two NLSY79 variables provide information on weeks worked in 1978. The number of weeks worked since last interview variable (R02153.) collected data for the period January 1, 1978, through the date of the 1979 interview. Additionally, the 1979 variable R02157. reports information for calendar year 1978. Both of these variables are found in the KEYVARS area of interest. See also the NLSY79 Work History CD, which includes a week-by-week employment history beginning with January 1, 1978.

*Q2: I cannot determine why an individual would be coded as a valid skip for the created variable "Weeks Worked in Past Calendar Year." Is documentation available on the creation of this variable?*

A2: The valid skips occur in 1979–81, because of age restrictions on some work experience questions. Respondents who were younger than 16 were not considered part of the labor force, so the survey did not collect complete employer information. Therefore, certain labor status variables, such as weeks worked, could not be created. Interested users should see the *Age and Work Experience* sections of the *NLSY79 User's Guide* for more information.

*Q3: We are using the sampling weight for comparisons involving race/ethnicity. When weighted frequencies are run, however, the resulting numbers seem too large. Are the weighted numbers supposed to represent the overall youth population in the country?*

A3: Yes, the weighted frequencies allow for a representation of the national youth population. However, two implied decimal places are included in the weights. For example, a weight of 457890 means that the person represents 4,578.90 people, not 457,890. □

## 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 located online at <http://www.nlsbibliography.org>

for a comprehensive listing.

Buchinsky, Moshe and Hunt, Jennifer. "Wage Mobility in the United States." *Review of Economics and Statistics* Vol. 81, No. 3, pp. 351-368, August 1999. [NLSY79]

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