

# Public-use Linked Mortality File

Updated February, 2015

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## **WARNING - DATA USE RESTRICTIONS! Read Carefully Before Use**

The Public Health Service Act (Section 308 (d)) provides that the data collected by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), may be used only for the purpose of health statistical reporting and analysis.

Any effort to determine the identity of any reported case is prohibited by this law.

NCHS does all it can to assure that the identity of data subjects cannot be disclosed. All direct identifiers, as well as any characteristics that might lead to identification, are either omitted from the data file or perturbed to prevent re-identification. Any intentional identification or disclosure of a person or establishment violates the assurances of confidentiality given to the providers of the information. Therefore, users will:

1. Use the data in these data files for statistical reporting and analysis only.
2. Make no use of the identity of any person or establishment discovered inadvertently and advise the Director, NCHS, of any such discovery (301-458-4500).
3. Not link these data files with individually identifiable data from other NCHS or non-NCHS data files.

By using these data, you signify your agreement to comply with the above-stated statutorily based requirements.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Public-use Linked Mortality Files include a limited set of mortality variables for adult participants only. The public-use versions of the NCHS Linked Mortality Files were subjected to data perturbation techniques to reduce the risk of participant re-identification. Synthetic data was substituted for the actual date and underlying cause of death for selected decedent records. Information regarding vital status was not perturbed. The Public-use Linked Mortality File provides mortality follow-up data from the date of survey participation through December 31, 2011. All survey participants are included on the Public-use Linked Mortality file regardless of linkage eligibility.

## **PUBLIC-USE LINKED MORTALITY FILE SAMPLE PROGRAMS**

There are two sample programs provided to assist researchers when reading in the Public-use Linked Mortality ASCII files. Please note that all surveys now use the same file layout and that the data for survey-specific variables will be blank in files for other surveys.

The first sample program provides SAS data input statements. By using the ASCII data file (.DAT file) as input to the program, other types of data files (e.g. SAS, SPSS) can be created.

The second program provides researchers using STATA with code to read in the data file and run their analyses using the STATA software.

Although the Public-use Linked Mortality File was carefully edited, errors may be detected. Please e-mail the NCHS Data Linkage Staff at [datalinkage@cdc.gov](mailto:datalinkage@cdc.gov) if any errors are detected in the Public-use Linked Mortality File data or documentation.

## **STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY**

This material has been cleared for public distribution by CDC and will be authentic if obtained directly from [ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health\\_Statistics/NCHS/datalinkage/linked\\_mortality/](ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/datalinkage/linked_mortality/). CDC takes all effort to assure the authenticity of electronically distributed documents. However, in all instances where the electronic and official agency record differ, the authenticity of the official agency record is controlling.

## **GUIDELINES FOR CITATION OF THE PUBLIC-USE LINKED MORTALITY DATA**

With the goal of mutual benefit, the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) requests that recipients of data files cooperate in certain actions related to their use. Any published material derived from the data should acknowledge NCHS as the original source. The suggested citation to appear at the bottom of all published tables is as follows:

Source: National Center for Health Statistics

When cited in a bibliography, the citation should read:

National Center for Health Statistics. Office of Analysis and Epidemiology, Public-use Linked Mortality File, 2015. Hyattsville, Maryland. (Available at the following address:  
[http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data\\_access/data\\_linkage/mortality.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data_access/data_linkage/mortality.htm)

The published material should also include a disclaimer that credits any analyses, interpretations, or conclusions reached to the author (recipient of the data file) and not to NCHS, which is responsible only for the initial data. Consumers who wish to publish a technical description of the data should make an effort to insure that the description is not inconsistent with that published by NCHS.