

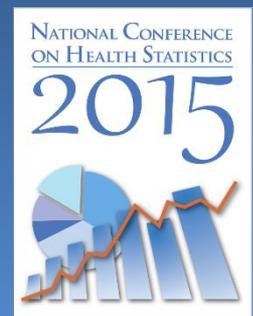
The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS): An Overview of Survey Design, Data Access, and Applications to Public Health

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Division of Health Interview Statistics
National Center for Health Statistics



Objectives

- ❑ Describe how the NHIS is conducted
- ❑ Describe how to access NHIS data
- ❑ Describe NHIS sample design and weighting
- ❑ Provide an example of creating NHIS data files
- ❑ Provide examples of its use in health monitoring
- ❑ Discuss future directions and resources for learning

**What is the National
Health Interview
Survey (NHIS)?**

The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)

- ❑ Established by the 1956 National Health Survey Act, Public Law 652, 84th Congress
- ❑ Authorized as the National Health Survey
- ❑ First fielded in July, 1957

NHIS General Purposes

- ❑ Collect data on the health status and health care access of the U.S. non-institutionalized population
- ❑ Address specific issues of current public health concern
- ❑ Provide estimates for monitoring (Health United States, Healthy People program)
 - ❑ 69 Healthy People 2020 Objectives

NHIS Interview Protocol

- ❑ In-person household interview survey
 - ❑ With some telephone follow-up
- ❑ Interviews performed by trained U. S. Census Bureau interviewers
- ❑ Computer-assisted personal interviewing

NHIS Interview Protocol (cont.)

- ❑ Household respondent provides basic socio-demographic information on all members of household
- ❑ For each family within a household
 - ❑ A knowledgeable adult 18 or older responds for him/herself and all other family members (Family Respondent)
 - ❑ One adult 18 or older (*Sample Adult*) and one child under age 18 (*Sample Child*) are randomly selected for more extensive set of questions. The sample adult answers for his/her self, while a knowledgeable adult answers for the child.

NHIS Structure: Basic Module

Family Core

- ❑ General information on all family members
- ❑ Family data
- ❑ Allows proxy respondents
- ❑ Fielded each year

Demographic
and general
health data

Sample Adult Core

- ❑ Self-response only
- ❑ Fielded each year

Health
condition,
risk behavior,
and health
behavior data

Sample Child Core

- ❑ Knowledgeable adult responds for child
- ❑ Fielded each year

NHIS Structure (cont.): Supplemental Modules

Purpose

- ❑ New topics or more detail on core topics
- ❑ Different each year
- ❑ Meet department goals/objectives

Sponsors of supplements (examples):

- ❑ National Cancer Institute (NCI)
- ❑ United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
- ❑ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (ASPE)
- ❑ National Center for Environmental Health (NCEH)

Examples of NHIS Supplements

- **Arthritis** (2002, 2003, 2006, 2009, 2014)
- **Asthma** (2002, 2008, 2013, 2014)
- **Balance/Dizziness** (2008), 2012, 2015)
- **Complementary and Alternative Medicine** (2002, 2007, 2012)
- **Cancer** (2000, 2005, 2010, 2015)
- **Diabetes** (2003, 2007)
- **Disability** (2002, 2008-present)
- **Epilepsy** (2010, 2013)
- **Food Security** (2011-present)
- **Health Information Technology** (2009, 2011-present)
- **Health Insurance** (2011-present)
- **Immunization** (2008-present)
- **Hearing** (2002, 2007, 2008), 2014)
- **Heart Disease** (2001, 2008, 2012, 2014)
- **Medical Care Access and Utilization** (2011-present)
- **Mental Health** (2001-2011, 2013, 2014)
- **Occupational Health** (2010, 2015)
- **Oral Health** (2008)
- **Vision** (2002, 2008)

NHIS Core Content

- ❑ Health conditions
- ❑ Health care access and utilization
- ❑ Health behaviors and risk factors
- ❑ Sociodemographic characteristics

Accessing NHIS Data

Where to Access NHIS Data?

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>

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National Health Interview Survey

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National Health Interview Survey

- About NHIS
- What's New
- Coming Events
- Questionnaires, Datasets, and Related Documentation
- Special Topics
- NHIS on Disability
- Survey Reports and Data Linked to NHIS
- Listserv

The National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) has monitored the health of the nation since 1957. NHIS data on a broad range of health topics are collected through personal household interviews. For over 50 years, the U.S. Census Bureau has been the data collection agent for the National Health Interview Survey. Survey results have been instrumental in providing data to track health status, health care access, and progress toward achieving national health objectives.

[New in 2014: Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander \(NHPI\) NHIS](#)

[Selected Participants](#)
Have you been selected to take part in the National Health Interview Survey?

 **NHIS Brochure**
[PDF - 715 KB]

 **Folleto de NHIS**
[PDF - 536 KB]

What's New

- [Imputed Income Files, 2014 \(8/2015\)](#)
- [Health Insurance Coverage: Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, January-March 2015](#) [PDF - 1 MB] (8/12/2015)
- [Health Insurance Coverage: Early Release of Quarterly Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, January 2010-March 2015](#) [PDF - 1 MB] (8/12/2015)
- [Preliminary Quarterly Microdata File, 2015 Quarter 1](#) [PDF- 168 KB] (8/12/2015)
- [Any Visit to the Eye Doctor in the Past 12 Months Among Adults Diagnosed With Diabetes, by Years Since Diabetes Diagnosis and by Age: United States, 2012-2013 \(8/2015\)](#)
- [Health Care Access and Utilization Among Adults Aged 18-64, by Race and Hispanic Origin: United States, 2013 and 2014](#)



Contact Us:

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[Contact CDC-INFO](#)

Where to Access NHIS Data?

<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>

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National Health Interview Survey

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[f](#) [t](#)

Questionnaires, Datasets, and Related Documentation

- [Survey Instruments \(Questionnaires\)](#)
- [1997-Present Data, Questionnaires and Related Documentation](#)
- [1996-Prior Data, Questionnaires and Related Documentation](#)
- [Methods](#)
- [Information about NHIS Supplements and Co-Sponsors](#)
- [NHIS restricted variable information, restricted and public use variable lists](#)
- [Summary of NHIS micro-data availability](#)  [PDF - 18 KB]
 - [NHIS micro-data files - record lengths and counts](#)  [PDF - 63 KB]
 - [NHIS micro-data reference information: currency of CD-ROM data files, MD5 checksums](#)  [PDF - 88 KB]

Related Sites

- [NHIS Early Release Program](#)
- [Surveys and Data](#)

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Questionnaires, Datasets and Related Documentation, 1997-Present

- ❑ Survey Description Document
- ❑ Survey Questionnaires
 - ❑ Questionnaire Reference Guide
 - ❑ English (Questionnaires and Flashcards)
 - ❑ Spanish (Questionnaire and Flashcards)
 - ❑ Field Representative Manual and Survey Flowchart
- ❑ Information on Co-Sponsors and Supplements
- ❑ Reports
- ❑ **Data Release**



2014 NHIS Data Release

- ❑ For each data file:
 - ❑ Variable summary
 - ❑ Variable layout
 - ❑ Variable frequencies
 - ❑ ASCII data
 - ❑ Sample SAS statements
 - ❑ Sample SPSS statements
 - ❑ Sample Stata statements

2014 NHIS Data Release

- Documentation for each data file
 - Variable summary
 - Variable layout
 - Variable frequencies
 - ASCII data
 - Sample SAS statements
 - Sample SPSS statements
 - Sample Stata statements

2014 NHIS Data Release

- **Sample Adult file**

- Variable summary  [PDF - 372 KB]
- Variable layout  [PDF - 2.3 MB]
- Variable frequencies  [PDF - 493 KB]
- ASCII data  [ZIP - 4 MB]
- Sample SAS statements [SAS - 142 KB]
- Sample SPSS statements [SPS - 192 KB]
- Sample Stata statements [DO - 128 KB]

2014 NHIS Data Release

Data files released for 2014:

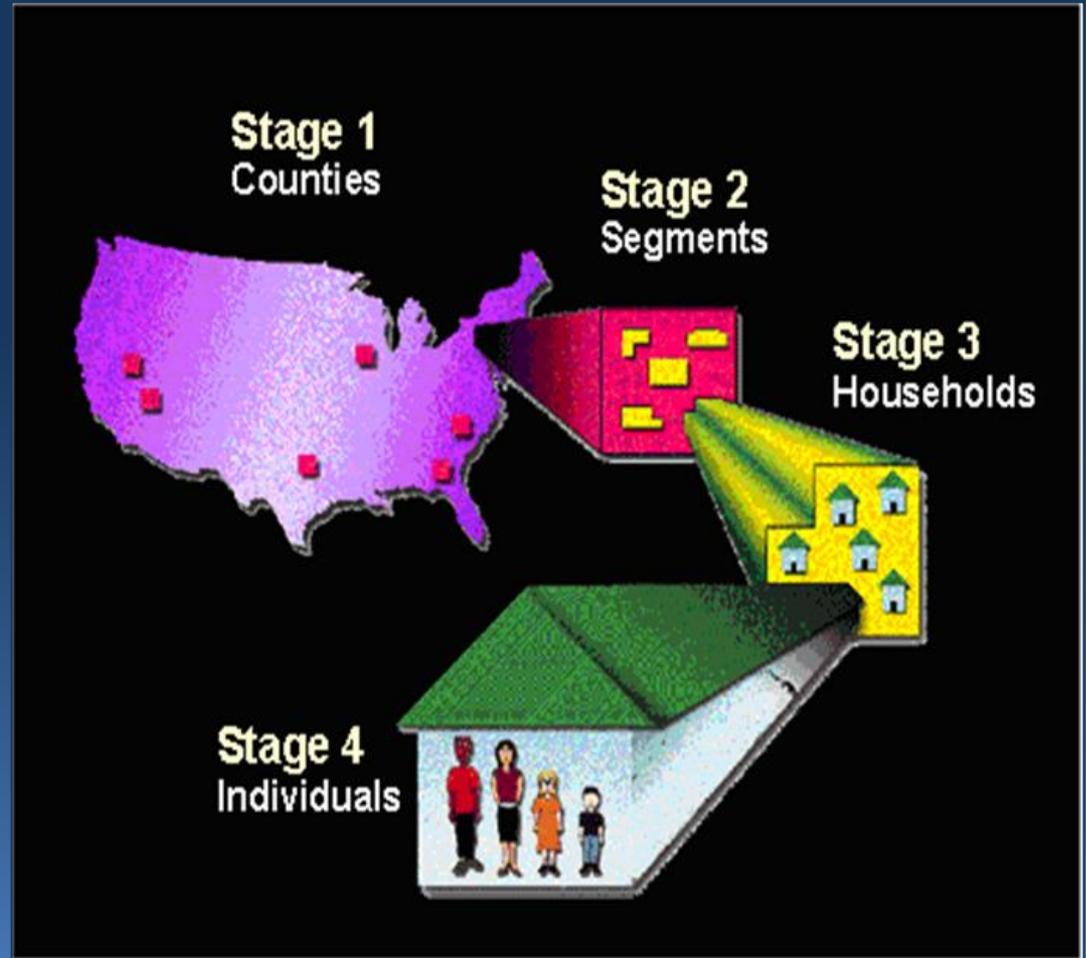
- ❑ Family (FAMILYXX)
 - ❑ Household (HOUSEHLD)
 - ❑ Injury/Poisoning Episode (INJPOIEP)
 - ❑ Person (PERSONSX)
 - ❑ Sample Child (SAMCHILD)
 - ❑ Sample Adult (SAMADULT)
-
- ❑ Imputed Income Files (INCMIMP1-INCMIMP5)
 - ❑ Paradata (PARADATA)
 - ❑ Family Disability Questions Tests (FMLYDISB)
 - ❑ Functioning and Disability (FUNCDISB)

(File names shown in parentheses)

Creating an NHIS Data File: Some Considerations

NHIS Sample Design

- ❑ Complex
- ❑ Important to take into account when computing variance estimates



For more information, see Design and Estimation for the National Health Interview Survey, 2006-2015: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_02/sr02_165.pdf

Sampling Weights

- ❑ Each file has its own sampling weight
- ❑ Weights should be used for all analyses
- ❑ Weights are used to inflate each observation
- ❑ Weights are adjusted for non-response, over-sampling, and most are calibrated to U.S. Census population estimates by age, sex, and race/ethnicity
- ❑ If weights are not used:
 - ❑ Percentages, means, and proportions will be affected
 - ❑ Estimates such as regression coefficients may be biased

Weighting Example: Race/Ethnicity of Persons 18-64 Years, NHIS 2013

Race/Ethnicity	Unweighted (%)	Weighted (%)
Hispanic	21.8	16.5
NH white	54.9	64.4
NH black	14.7	12.6
NH Asian	7.3	5.6
NH all other races	1.3	0.9

Note: NH = non-Hispanic.

Sample Design Variables

- ❑ Consequences of not accounting for sample design when calculating variance
 - ❑ Standard errors will be, on average, too small and confidence intervals too narrow
 - ❑ More Type I error
- ❑ To obtain accurate variance estimates, use the NHIS design variables in your analysis to account for the NHIS complex sample design

Using Weights and Sample Design Variables, Example: Average Number of Days in Bed Due to Illness/Injury for NH White and NH Black Adults 18-64 Years, NHIS 2012

Statistic	NHIS Unweighted		NHIS Weighted		NHIS Complex Weighted	
	NHW	NHB	NHW	NHB	NHW	NHB
Mean	4.41	5.59	4.10	4.88	4.10	4.88
Std. error	0.18	0.41	0.18	0.38	0.23	0.47
t-statistic	-2.88		-1.99		-1.52	
p-value	0.004		0.046		0.130	

Note: NHW = non-Hispanic white; NHB = non-Hispanic black.

Variables to Include in Your Analytic File

1. Study variables
2. Weight variable(s)
3. Sample design variables
 - ❑ **STRAT_P** and **PSU_P** (2006-Present)
 - ❑ **STRATUM** and **PSU** (1997-2005)

Which Weight Do I Use?

- ❑ Person file.....**WTFA**
- ❑ Sample Adult file.....**WTFA_SA**
- ❑ Sample Child file.....**WTFA_SC**
- ❑ Household file:.....**WTFA_HH**
- ❑ Family file:.....**WTFA_FAM**

Creating the File: Example Research Question

Is there a relationship between
the health insurance status of adults and
unmet medical needs due to cost?

Creating the File: Data File Information Available



- ❑ Survey Description Document
- ❑ File documentation (i.e., layout, summary, unweighted frequencies)
- ❑ Data
- ❑ SAS, SPSS, and Stata input statements
- ❑ Questionnaire (English and Spanish)
- ❑ Interviewer's Manual

Creating the File: Creating a Formatted File from Raw Data

- ❑ The NHIS data and SAS, SPSS, and Stata programs are available from the NHIS website (<http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm>).
- ❑ Programs can be used to create datasets with variable formats and labels
- ❑ Each data file (e.g., Person, Sample Adult) has its own SAS, SPSS, and Stata program

Creating the File: Identifying the Files You Need

- ❑ Variables are in different files
 - ❑ Health insurance (Person file)
 - ❑ Unmet medical needs (Sample Adult files)
- ❑ Must merge Person and Sample Adult files

Creating the File: Identifying the Files/Variables You Need

- ❑ Person file variables:
 - ❑ Identifiers: household number (HHX), family number (FMX), and person number (FPX)
 - ❑ Health insurance (NOTCOV)
 - ❑ Design variables (STRAT_P and PSU_P)

Creating the File: Identifying the Files/Variables You Need

- ❑ Sample Adult file variables
 - ❑ Identifiers: household number (HHX), family number (FMX), and person number (FPX)
 - ❑ Needed, but could not afford and did not receive any of the following in the past 12 months:
 - ❑ Prescription medications (AHCAFYR1)
 - ❑ Mental health care or counseling (AHCAFYR2)
 - ❑ Dental care (including check-ups) (AHCAFYR3)
 - ❑ Eyeglasses (AHCAFYR4)
- ❑ Sample Adult sampling weight (WTFA_SA)

Creating the File: Identifying the Files/Variables You Need

- ❑ Weight chosen depends on the unit of analysis
 - ❑ The population of interest
 - ❑ In what data file the main outcome of interest is located

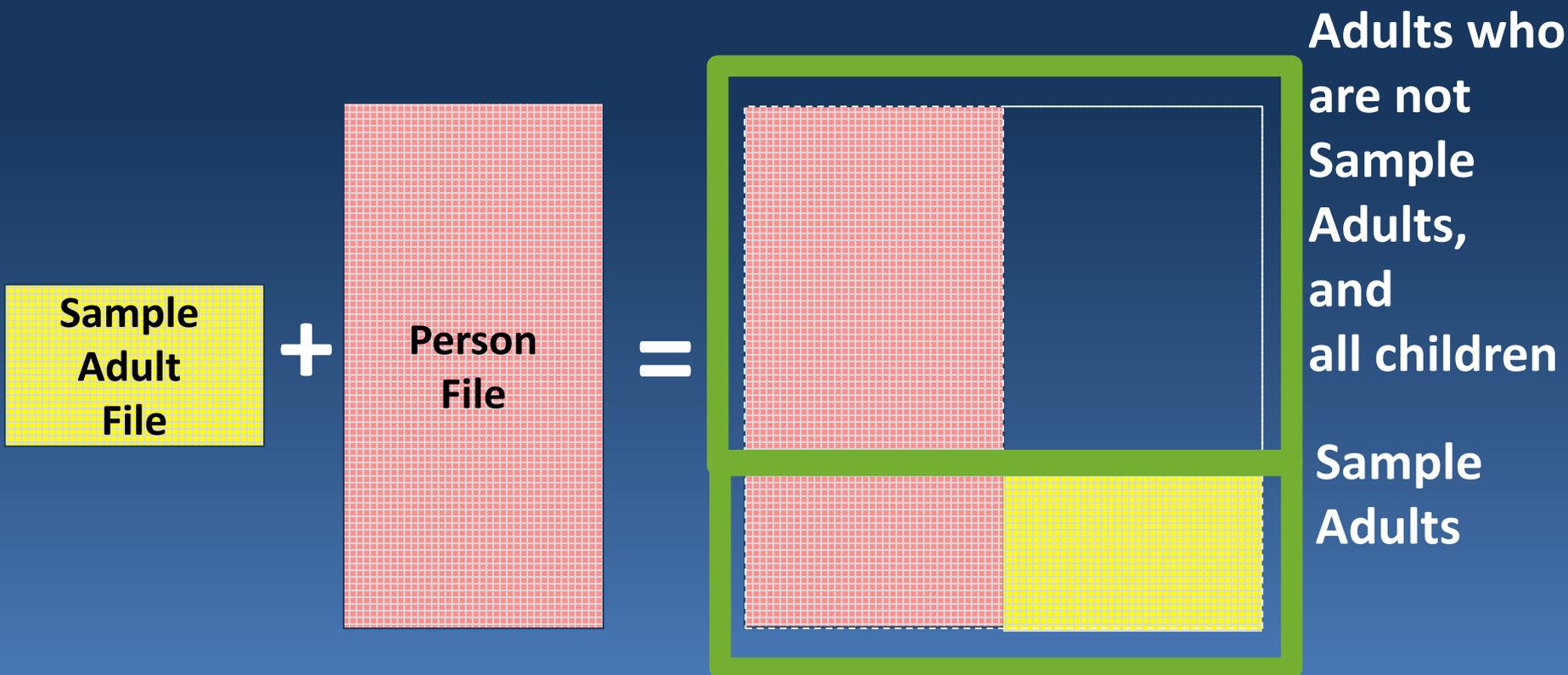
Creating the File: Merging Files Together

- ❑ To merge the Person and Sample Adult files, use the household number (**HHX**), family number (**FMX**), and person number (**FPX**)
 - ❑ Note the name of the person number variable has changed:
 - ❑ **FPX** (2004-Present)
 - ❑ **PX** (1997-2003)
- ❑ Example merging code can be found in...

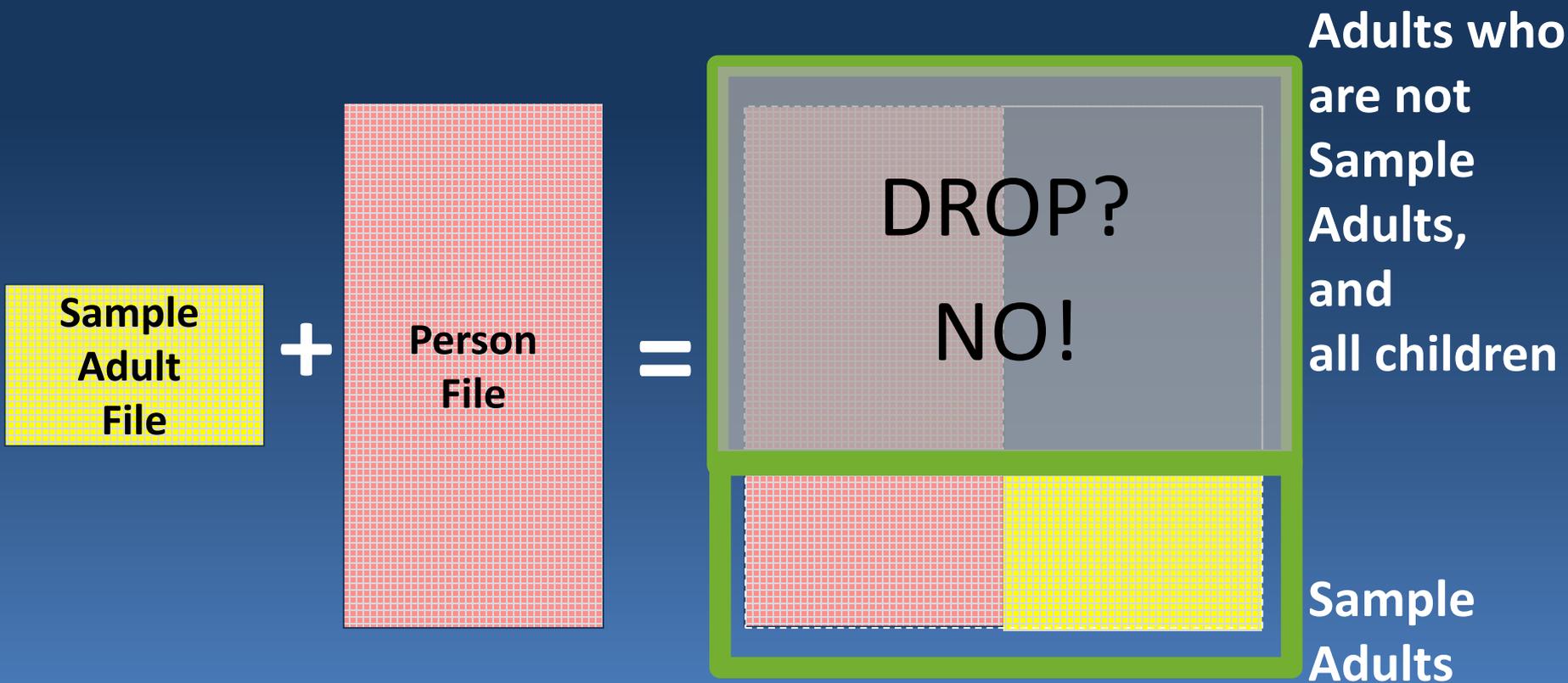
The Survey Description Document



Creating the File: Merging Files Together



Creating the File: Merging Files Together



Creating the File: Subpopulation Analysis

- ❑ Can produce correct point estimates using appropriately weighted subsetted data. But...
- ❑ **Must retain design variable information for *all records* to obtain *correct variance estimates***
- ❑ To obtain estimates for a subpopulation, use the appropriate statistical software procedures:
 - ❑ **SUBPOP** (Stata)
 - ❑ **SUBPOP**N (SUDAAN)
 - ❑ **DOMAIN** (SAS)

Creating the File: Subpopulation Analysis

- For more specific information, see

The Survey Description Document



[ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/Dataset_Documentation/
NHIS/2014/srvydesc.pdf](ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/Dataset_Documentation/NHIS/2014/srvydesc.pdf)

Creating the File: Summary

- ❑ The NHIS data are released as multiple data files that can be merged together
- ❑ Use the documentation to identify which files have the variables you need
- ❑ Be sure to get the design variables and weight variable from the appropriate files
- ❑ Use appropriate statistical software to use the weights and the sample design variables to obtain accurate, unbiased point estimates and variance estimates

Examples using the NHIS

Stephen J. Blumberg, Ph.D., **Tainya C. Clarke, Ph.D.**,
Debra L. Blackwell, Ph.D.,

Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Men's Use of Mental Health Treatments.

NCHS data brief, no 206. Hyattsville, MD: National Center
for Health Statistics. 2015.

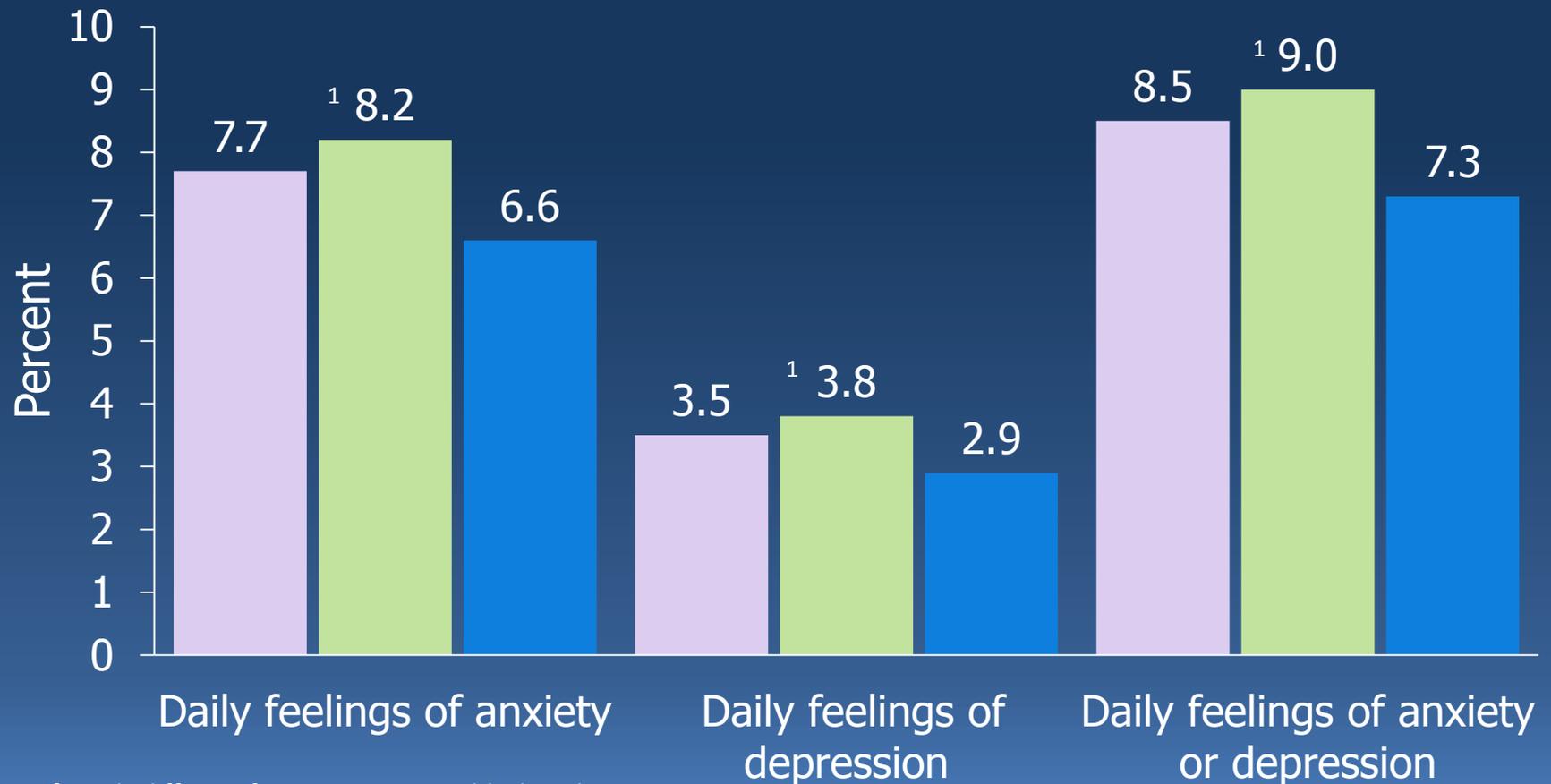
- ❑ This report used nationally representative data on the frequency of mental health symptoms and related treatment utilization to compare men of color with non-Hispanic white men.
- ❑ Men of color included non-Hispanic black and Hispanic men.
- ❑ It also explored whether racial and ethnic disparities differ by age, health insurance coverage status, and income.

Methods

- ❑ Men aged 18 and over (n= 21,058)
- ❑ We pooled data from 2010 -2013 to get a large enough sample size for our outcome of interest.
- ❑ Mental health and medication use data came from the Quality of Life (QOL) and the Adult Functioning and Disability (AFD) supplements to sample adult NHIS.
- ❑ Demographic and other health information (including health insurance coverage) were collected in the Core components of NHIS.
- ❑ We used a **special sample adult weight** on the supplemental files because our outcome of interest came from this file and we generalized our findings to the US adult population.

Figure 1-1. Percentage of men aged 18 and over with daily feelings of anxiety or depression, by race and ethnicity: United States, 2010-2013

■ All races and ethnicities ■ Non-Hispanic white ■ Non-Hispanic black or Hispanic

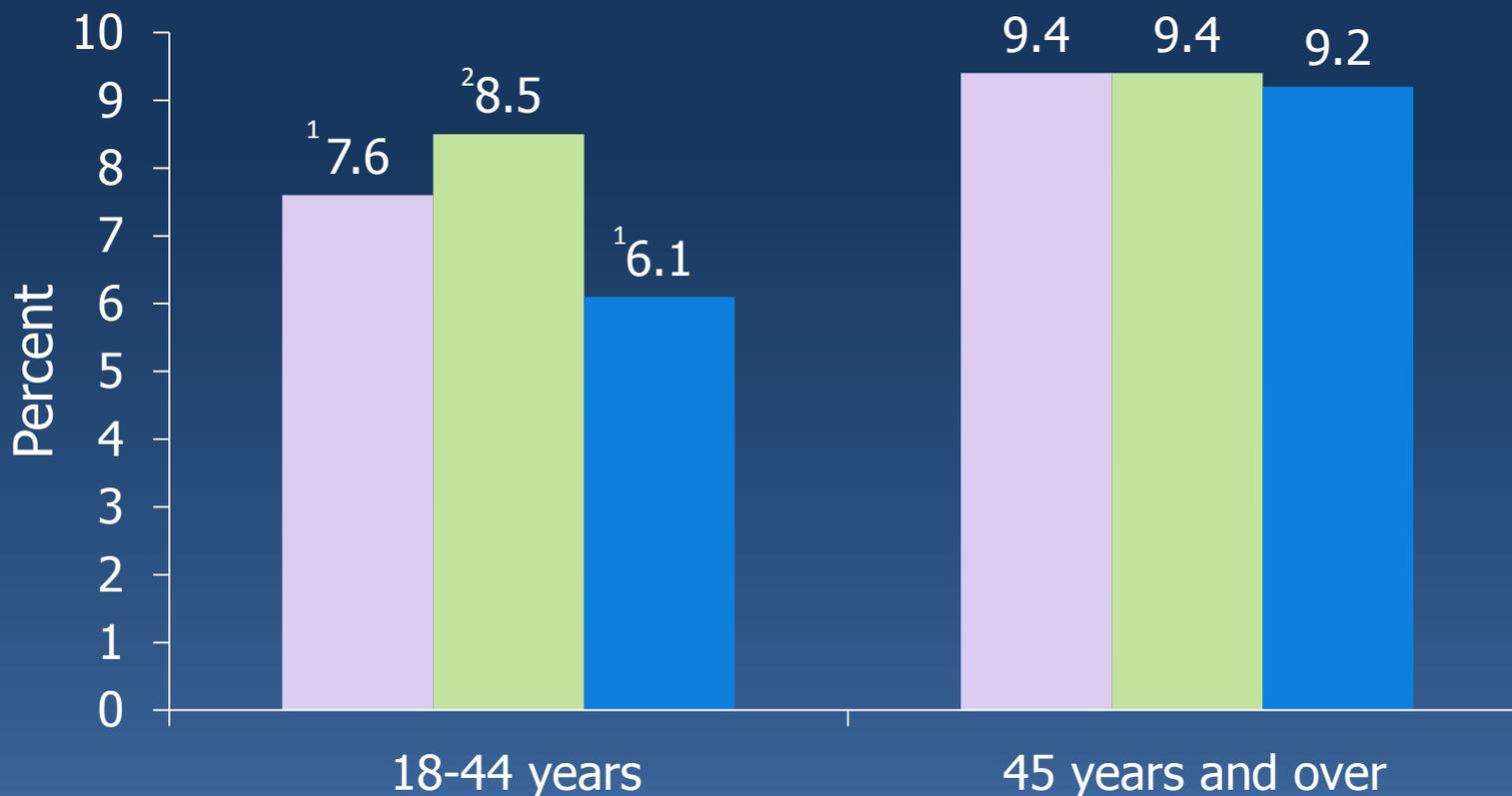


¹Significantly different from non-Hispanic black and Hispanic men.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2010-2013.

Figure 1-2. Percentage of men aged 18 and over with daily feelings of anxiety or depression, by age and race and ethnicity: United States, 2010-2013

■ All races and ethnicities ■ Non-Hispanic white ■ Non-Hispanic black or Hispanic

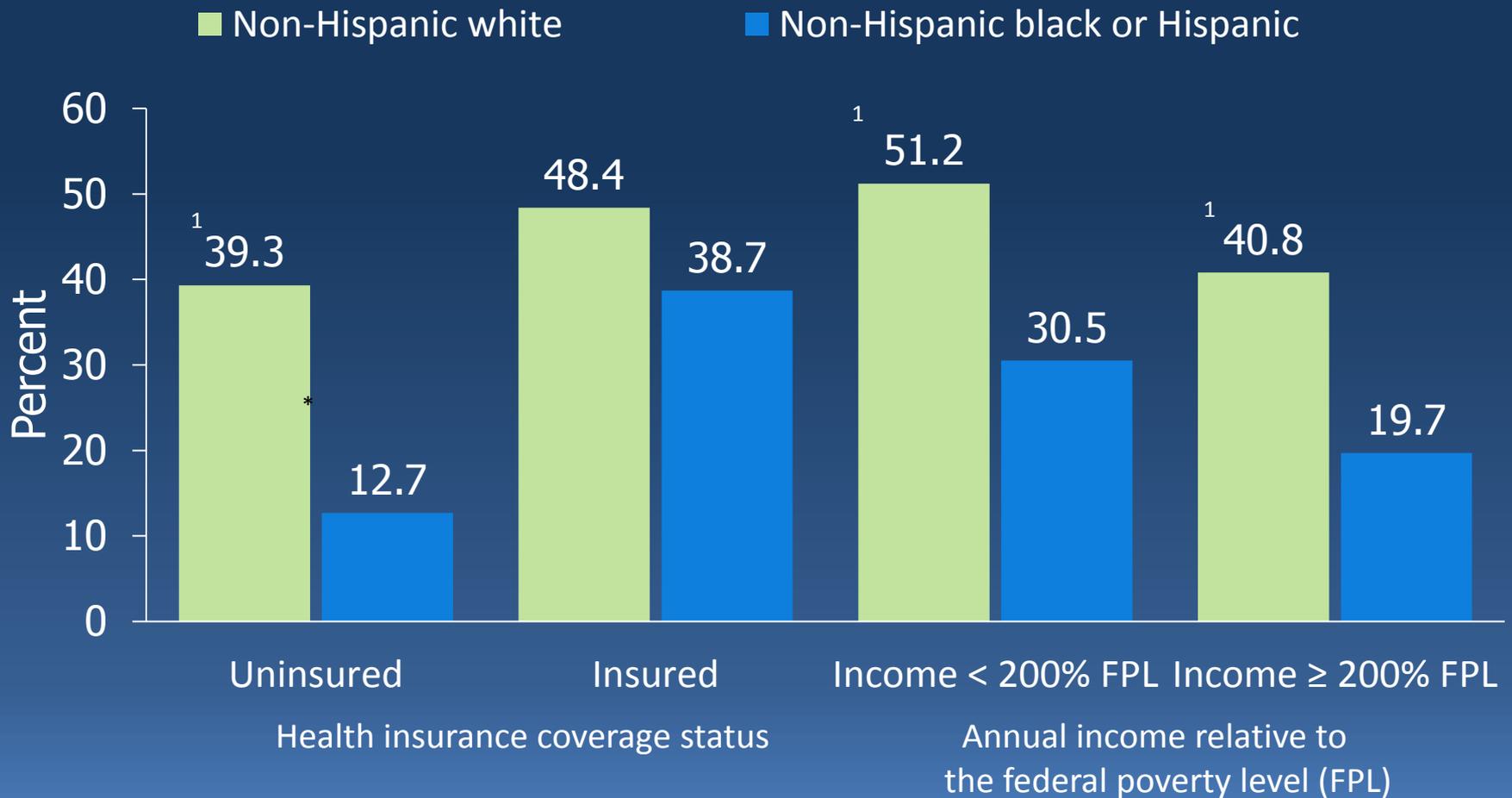


¹Significantly different from men aged 45 and over in the same race and ethnicity group.

²Significantly different from non-Hispanic black and Hispanic men in the same age group.

SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Health Interview Survey, 2010-2013.

Figure 1-3. Percentage of men who took medication or talked to a mental health professional, among men aged 18-44 who felt anxious or depressed every day, by health insurance coverage status, income, and race and ethnicity: United States, 2010-2013



Tainya C. Clarke, Ph.D., Lindsey I. Jones, M.P.H.,
Barbara J. Stussman, B.A., Patricia M. Barnes, M.A.,
Richard L. Nahin, Ph.D.

Trends in the Use of Complementary Health Approaches Among Adults: United States, 2002 – 2012

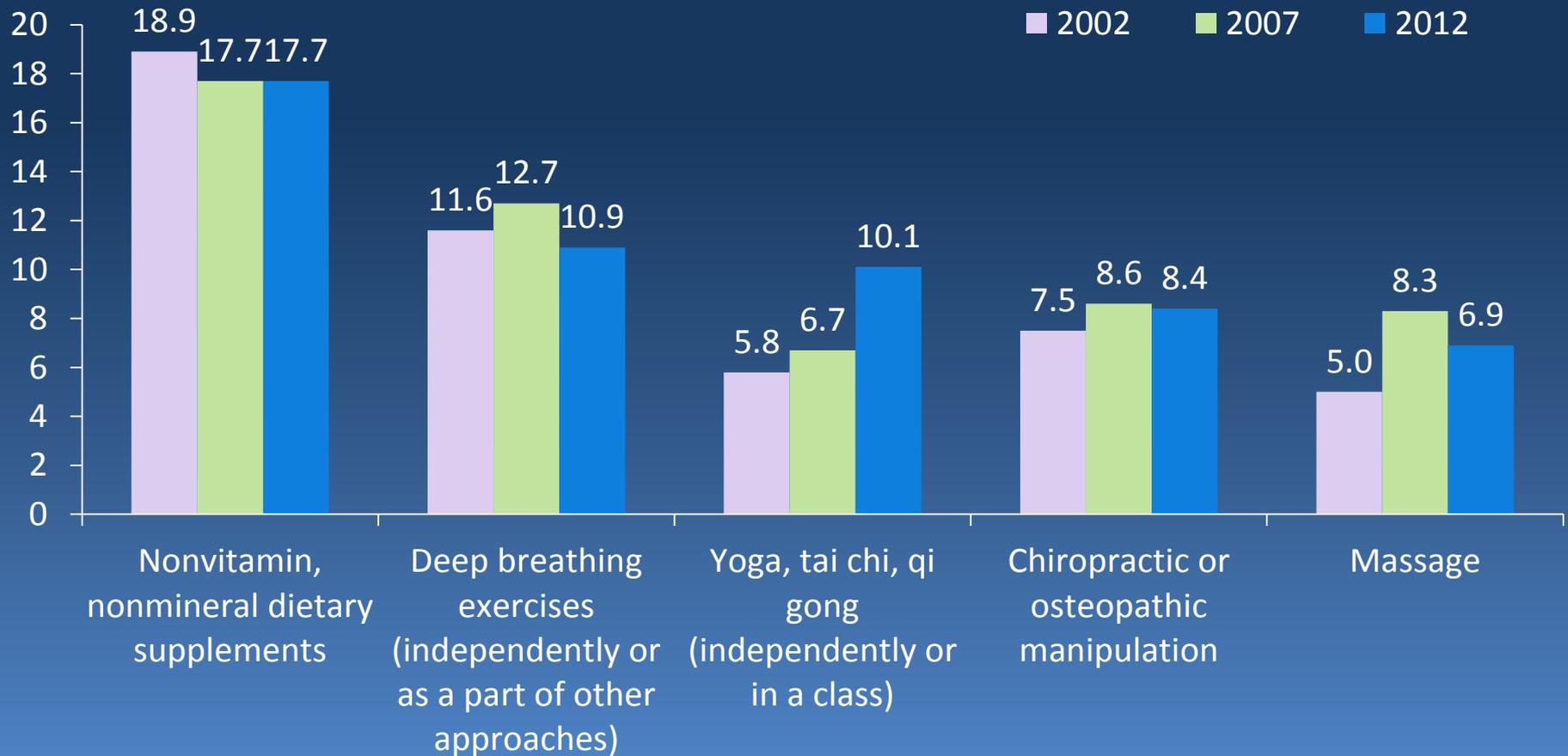
National health statistics reports; no 79. Hyattsville, MD:
National Center for Health Statistics. 2015.

- ❑ This report presented national estimates of the use of complementary health approaches among adults in the United States across three time points.
- ❑ Complementary health approaches include an array of modalities and products with a history of use or origins outside of conventional Western medicine.
- ❑ Findings were generalized to the noninstitutionalized US adult population.

Methods

- ❑ The study sample included 88,962 US adults aged 18 and over.
- ❑ The study used data from 2002, 2007 and 2012 to look at differences in use within the population over time.
- ❑ Data on use of complementary health approaches came from the Alternative Health (ALT) supplements to sample adult NHIS.
- ❑ Demographic and other health information (e.g. age and gender) were collected in the Core components of NHIS.
- ❑ We used the **sample adult weight** because that weight was also used in the ALT supplement and we generalized our findings to the US adult population.

Figure 2-1. Trend in the use of common complementary health approaches among US adults in the past 12 months: United States, 2002-2012



In summary

We can use

- ❑ A single year of NHIS data to answer a particular research question
- ❑ Combine core files and or supplements within a year to gain detailed information on specific topics.
- ❑ Combine years to get a large enough sample size
- ❑ Combine years to look at trends over time

What's Next for the NHIS?

Selected 2015 NHIS Supplements

Topic	Sponsor
Cancer	NCI
Heart Disease and Stroke	CDC/DHDSP, NIH/NHLBI, NIH/NINDS
Tobacco Use	FDA
Food Security	USDA
Enhanced Questions on Health Care Access and Utilization	DHHS/ASPE
Adult and Child Immunization	CDC/NCIRD
Child Mental Health Brief SDQ	SAMHSA/CMHS

Additional Future Plans for the NHIS

- ❑ Sample redesign in 2016
- ❑ Content redesign in 2018
- ❑ Online Analytic Real-time System (OARS) tool for use with restricted in-house and public use data
- ❑ New (to NHIS) modes of data collection

**How to Learn More
about the NHIS:
Where to Go for Help**

Navigating the NHIS Website

The screenshot shows the NHIS website interface. A red arrow points to the 'National Health Interview Survey' link in the left sidebar. Another red arrow points to the 'What's New' section header in the main content area. A third red arrow points to the 'Print page' button in the top right corner. The website header includes the CDC logo, the text 'Centers for Disease Control and Prevention', and a search bar. Below the header is an alphabetical index. The main content area features a 'What's New' section with a list of recent publications, a 'Selected Participants' section, and a 'Related Sites' section. The right sidebar contains contact information for the Division of Health Interview Statistics.

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Related Sites

- [NHIS Early Release Program](#)
- [Surveys and Data Collection Systems](#)
- [Integrated Version of Selected NHIS Variables](#)
- [Joint Canada/United States Survey of Health](#)
- [Child and Family Statistics](#)

What's New

- [Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Men's Use of Mental Health Treatments \(6/2015\)](#)
- [Communication Disorders and Use of Intervention Services Among Children Aged 3-17 Years: United States, 2012 \(6/2015\)](#)
- [Characteristics of Children in Medicaid Managed Care and Medicaid Fee-for-service, 2003-2005 \[PDF - 773 KB\] \(6/2015\)](#)
- [Serious Psychological Distress Among Adults: United States, 2009-2013 \(5/2015\)](#)
- [Insurance Status by State Medicaid Expansion Status: Early Release of Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, 2013-September 2014 \[PDF - 195 KB\] \(5/21/15\)](#)
- [Association Between Diagnosed ADHD and Selected Characteristics Among Children Aged 4-17 Years: United States, 2011-2013 \(5/2015\)](#)
- [Health Insurance Coverage: Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, January-September 2014 \[PDF - 520 KB\] \(3/2015\)](#)
- [Selected Estimates Based on Data From the January-September 2014 National Health Interview Survey \(3/2015\)](#)
- [Health Insurance Coverage: Early Release of Quarterly Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey, January 2010-September 2014 \[PDF - 367 KB\] \(3/2015\)](#)
- [Preliminary Quarterly Microdata Files: National Health Interview Survey, January-September 2014 \[PDF - 164 KB\]](#)

Selected Participants

Have you been selected to take part in the National Health Interview Survey?

- [NHIS Brochure \[PDF - 715 KB\]](#)
- [Folleto de NHIS \[PDF - 536 KB\]](#)
- [Confidentiality Brochure \[PDF - 591 KB\]](#)
- [Folleto de Confidencial \[PDF - 785 KB\]](#)
- [Early Release Brochure \[PDF - 1.2 MB\]](#)

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Hyattsville, MD 20782-2064
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(301) 458-4001
nhis@cdc.gov
[Contact CDC-INFO](#)

Reports and Products

- ❑ Microdata files, questionnaires, related products
- ❑ Annual reports of estimates (*Summary Health Statistics*)
 - ❑ Population, Children, and Adults
- ❑ Early Release Program
 - ❑ Key Health Indicators, Health Insurance, Access and Utilization, Wireless Substitution
- ❑ Quick Stats
- ❑ Data Briefs
- ❑ National Health Statistics Reports

Research Data Center (RDC)

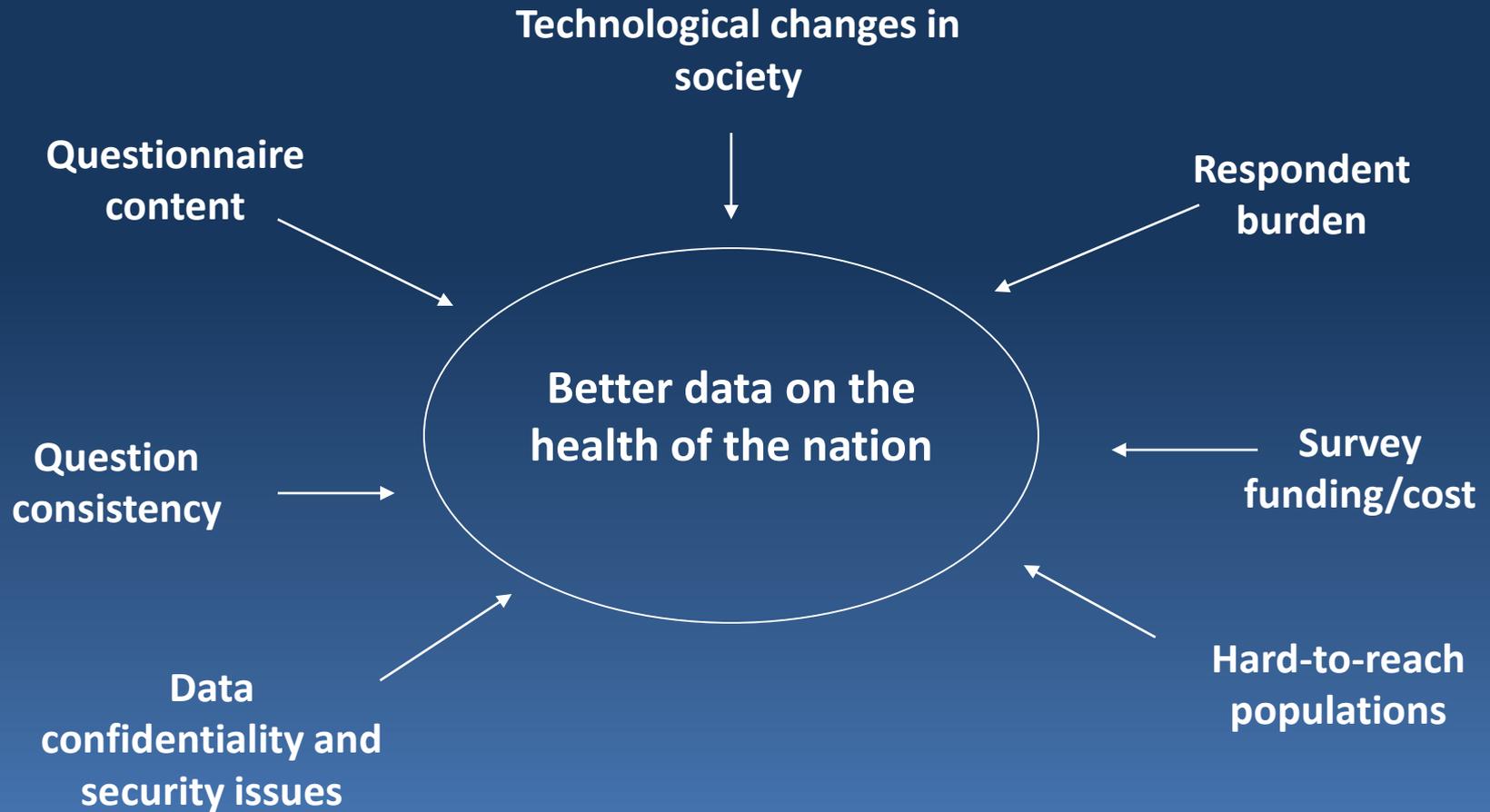
- ❑ <http://www.cdc.gov/rdc/>
- ❑ <http://www.cdc.gov/rdc/B1DataType/Dt1225.htm>
 - List of public use and restricted variables on data files
 - Submit process application for research project
 - Application is reviewed by RDC for approval to proceed
 - Fee
 - rdca@cdc.gov

Strengths of and Challenges Facing the NHIS

Strengths of the NHIS

- Large, nationally representative sample
- Household and family based survey
- In-person survey
- Broad range of information
- Demographic detail
- Ongoing annual survey
- Topical supplementary information
- Relatively high response rates
- Links to other data sets
- Timely release

Challenges Facing the NHIS



For More Information:

To keep up with new developments, subscribe to the NHIS Listserv:

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/nhis_listserv.htm

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THANK YOU!!