

## What's New in Version K of the RAND HRS?

Version K incorporates the Final Release V1 for 2008 and the most recent versions of the cross wave Tracker and Region and Mobility files. It also adds new variables, including those from the HRS imputations of cognitive functioning measures, and makes adjustments and corrections. The current versions of the core and cross wave data used in Version K are:

- 1992 Final V1.01
- 1993 Final V2.1
- 1994 Final V1.0<sup>1</sup>
- 1995 Final V2.0
- 1996 Final V4.0
- 1998 Final V2.3
- 2000 Final V1.0<sup>2</sup>
- 2002 Final V2.0
- 2004 Final V1.0 (October 2006)
- 2006 Final Release V2.0 (September 2010)
- 2008 Final Release V1.0 (November 2010)
- Tracker 2008 Final V1.0 (October 2010)
- Cross-Wave Region and Mobility File V3.0 (May 2010)
- Master ID File V5 (December 2009)
- Cross-Wave Imputation of Cognitive Functioning Measures 1992-2006 V1.0 (September 2009)

We have added the following to the file:

- **HRS Imputed Cognitive Functioning Measures:** These measures include memory assessments and cognitive tasks from the Cognition module. Since these measures are not missing at random, HRS has imputed missing values for the 1992-2006 interview years (Waves 1 to 8) into consistently named RAND HRS-like variables. We have included the HRS imputations into the RAND HRS, with minor adjustments to variable names and special missing values. At this time, there are no imputations for these variables in Wave 9. They have been added to this codebook at the end of the Health section. Two documents, available on the HRS web site under User Guides, describe the availability of cognitive measures in the HRS and the imputation methods applied:
  - o Mary Beth Ofstedal, Gwenith G. Fisher and A. Regula Herzog, [Documentation of Cognitive Functioning Measures in the Health and Retirement Study](#). *HRS Documentation Report DR-006* (March 2005)
  - o Gwenith G. Fisher, Halimah Hassan, Willard L. Rodgers, and David R. Weir, [HRS Imputation of Cognitive Functioning Measures: 1992 - 2006 Data Description](#). (September, 2009)

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<sup>1</sup> Beginning in Version F, we drop respondents from the 1994 HRS publicly distributed files who are flagged as deceased on the Tracker file. 175 of these 176 dropped cases were actually exit interviews rather than core interviews. The exit interviews were flagged with INW2=2 in prior versions.

<sup>2</sup> We have deleted one case from the 2000 V1.0 file, who was later discovered to be a roommate rather than a partner, according to HRS (January 28, 2005 Data Alert). This case was included in the early release of 2002 but dropped in the final release. We have also changed the HHIDPN for one case from 75573041 to 75573010 according to HRS (November 21, 2005 Data Alert), and adjusted the appropriate spouse ID.

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- **Number of children ever born (RAEVBRN):** We have added this variable as reported at the respondent's first interview. Some AHEAD respondents provided answers in both 1993 and 1995. We add a flag that indicates the consistency of these responses (RAEVBRNF).
- **Date of death:** We have added both the HRS-informed (RADMONTH, RADYEAR, RADDATE) and National Death Index [NDI] (RANMONTH, RANYEAR, RANDATE) months of death as taken from the Tracker file. We have also included the NDI match score (RANSORE). We check these dates for consistency with interviews at which we see the respondent alive and flag any inconsistencies (RADDATEF and RANDATEF).

We have made the following adjustments, improvements, and corrections to the data and documentation:

- **Smoking variables (RwSMOKEV, RwSMOKEN):** Starting in 2004 (Wave 7) these questions were skipped if a respondent had never reported smoking before. In prior versions of the RAND HRS we set these cases to a special missing (.N, assumed No) when the questions were skipped for this reason, because technically the respondent may have begun smoking since the last wave. Based on the low frequency with which this occurs in prior waves, we now set these cases to zero for No.
- **Social Security variables (RASSRECV, RASSAGEM, RASSAGEB, SASSRECV, SASSAGEM, SASSAGEB):** We corrected a problem with these variables in the June 2010 release of the RAND HRS Version J file, and this correction is incorporated in Version K. The problem came from a programming problem that prevented incorporation of 2008 data in the derivation of these variables.
- **Miscellaneous:** We have updated the 2006 and 2008 variables related to life table based survival probabilities (RwLIV75P, RwLIV75R, RwLIV10P, RwLIV10R) to use the 2006 instead of the 2004 NCHS Life Tables. We dropped one case that is present in the 2002 HRS data, but that HRS has found was not a qualified respondent (HHIDPN = 022965041). The spouse of this case has been set to non-response for Wave 6, as recommended by HRS (HHIDPN = 022965040). We also restructured the programs deriving the detailed variables for employer-provided health insurance to improve their reliability as we add future waves and made minor corrections to the codebook, thanks to user feedback.

We have revised Appendix A in this document, which lists details of special cases and effects of changes and corrections.

The RAND/HRS data project is committed to producing high quality data for analysis. To this end, we have employed many innovative programming and quality assurance techniques including paired peer programming, standardized macros, and independent review. If you do, however, notice any undocumented discrepancies or apparent problems with the data, please let us know by e-mailing us ([randhrshelp@rand.org](mailto:randhrshelp@rand.org)).

Though we have attempted to derive measures that are consistent across waves, the underlying HRS data do not always allow this. Some of the native inconsistencies are present in our derived measures, but should be documented in detail in this codebook. Before using any measure comparatively across interview years,

please be sure to read the variable description in this codebook carefully, particularly the sections on “How Constructed” and “Cross Wave Differences in the Original HRS Data” that are included for each variable. If there are cross wave differences that we have not documented, please let us know ([randhrshelp@rand.org](mailto:randhrshelp@rand.org)).

In the future we plan to implement the following changes and additions:

- **Total Medical Expenditure Brackets:** In Version F we added the reported total medical expenditure brackets as categorical variables for Waves 3 to 6 (RwTOTMB), and a version of this variable that imputes complete brackets when needed (RwTOTMBI). The question about total medical expenditures is not asked from wave 7 and forward. The continuous total medical expenditures are imputed in this version of the RAND HRS up to Wave 6, but *we plan to drop these imputations* in future releases due to concerns about the quality of the imputations based on limited information. We will continue to impute out-of-pocket expenses.
- **Improvements to Income and Wealth Imputations:** *The improvements to the income and wealth imputations made originally for Version J have been applied only in Wave 9.* We examined trends over time to assess the compatibility with imputations in earlier waves, and found that the trends (e.g., increases or decreases in income and wealth components) made sense. However, we plan to implement these and other improvements to prior waves in coming releases.