

Langa-Weir Classification of Cognitive Function (1995 Onward)

Kenneth M. Langa, David R. Weir, Mohammed Kabeto, and Amanda Sonnega

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Survey Research Center

Institute for Social Research

University of Michigan

This document describes a researcher contributed dataset that provides a total summary score for cognition using measures¹ from the core HRS interview as well as three derived categories: Normal, Cognitively Impaired but not Demented (CIND), and Demented. We refer to these as the Langa-Weir Classifications (Crimmins et al., 2011).² HRS also makes use of proxy respondents to reduce sample attrition.³ Therefore, this dataset also includes scoring of cognition based on data from proxy respondent interviews.

Self Respondents

HRS employs a range of measures to assess cognitive status that can be used to create a summary score. Depending on the study sample, researchers can use either a 35-point (range 0-35) or 27-point (range 0-27) scale to determine total cognitive functioning. The 35-point scale⁴ includes a subset of questions that **were only asked of respondents age 65 and older** whereas the 27-point scale includes question that were asked of all HRS respondents.

The 27-point scale includes: 1) immediate and delayed 10-noun free recall test to measure memory (0 to 20 points); 2) a serial sevens subtraction test to measure working memory (0 to 5 points); and 3) a counting backwards test to measure speed of mental processing (0 to 2 points). The additional questions included in the 35-point scale are the three mental status questions that include: 1) date naming (0 to 4 points); 2) object naming (0 to 2 points); and 3) naming the president and the vice president of the United States (0 to 2 points).

The Weir-Langa Classifications map onto the 27-point scale (variable name *cogtot27_imp*) thus: Normal (12 – 27); Cognitively Impaired but not Demented (CIND) (7 – 11); and Demented (0 – 6) (variable name *cogfunction*). Crimmins et al. (2011) documents the methods used to make these classifications based on diagnostic information from the ADAMS. Another important

¹ Much more detail on all of these measures is available in the user guide, *Documentation of Cognitive Functioning Measures in the Health and Retirement Study*, also available on the HRS website: <https://hrs.isr.umich.edu/sites/default/files/biblio/dr-006.pdf>

² Crimmins, E.M., Kim, J.K., Langa, K.M., & Weir, D.R. (2011). Assessment of cognition using surveys and neuropsychological assessment: the health and retirement study and the aging, demographics, and memory study. *The Journals of Gerontology, Series B: Psychological Sciences and Social Sciences*, 66B(S1), i162–i171, doi:10.1093/geronb/gbr048

³Weir DR, Faul JD, Langa KM. Proxy interviews and bias in cognition measures due to non-response in longitudinal studies: a comparison of HRS and ELSA. *Longitudinal and Life Course Studies*. 2011;2(2):170-184. doi:10.14301/lfcs.v2i2.116.

⁴ The 35-point scale is available in the RAND HRS dataset as RwCOGTOT.

feature of the present contributed dataset is that it makes use of imputed information for the HRS cognitive measures. Procedures for the imputation methodology are available on the HRS website.⁵ It is important to note that if you choose to use raw (not imputed) data, you will be missing a large fraction of respondents with dementia.

Proxy Respondents

If you wish to include proxy respondents in your study sample, it is important to understand that there is no direct assessment of cognition. Rather, we suggest the use of a combination of instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs), proxy assessment of respondent's memory, and interviewer's assessment of respondent's cognition to create a total cognition score based on proxy information. Note that in this contributed dataset, we also imputed missing values on these three variables.

The total cognition score based on proxy information is an 11-point scale using proxy assessment of memory (excellent, very good, good, fair, poor), IADL limitations (ranging from no limitations to 5 limitations), and the interviewer assessment of cognitive impairment (CI: no CI, may have CI, has CI). For proxy assessment of memory, "excellent" was assigned a value of 0, "very good" a value of 1, "good" a value of 2, "fair" a value of 3, and "poor" a value of 4. For the interviewer assessment of CI, "no CI" was assigned a value of 0, "may have CI" a value of 1, and "has CI" a value of 2. In the 2000 interview, there is a fourth classification of interviewer assessment (please refer to variable G517), and it is classified as "has CI." Combining these three variables results in a scale ranging from 0 to 11, with higher scores indicating worse cognitive function.

The interviewer assessment of cognitive impairment question was not asked for any wave prior to 2000; therefore, for waves 1995-1998, we created a 9-point scale by adding the proxy assessment of memory and IADL limitations. The 11-point scale and the 9-point scale were combined into a single variable that range from 0-11 or 0-9 depending on the years cognition was assessed (variable name *prxyscore_imp*). Therefore, beginning in the 2000 HRS interview, we used the 11-point scale and 9-point scale prior the 2000 HRS interview to classify proxy-respondents into Normal, CIND or Demented. This categorization is combined with the non-proxy categorization so that both proxy and non-proxy interview information is used to create the

⁵ Health and Retirement Study Imputation of Cognitive Functioning Measures: 1992 – 2014, available on the HRS website: <http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/modules/meta/xyear/cogimp/desc/COGIMPdd.pdf>

summary categorization (variable name: *cogfunction*).

Lastly, note that the dataset also contains all of the variables used to create the summary scores with imputed values.

The classifications and their relevant cut points are summarized in Table 1. The variable names and labels included in this dataset are in Table 2. The data are released in wide format, but the code to reshape to long format is included at the end of this document.

Papers that use the Langa-Weir Classifications

Davydow D, Levine D, Zivin K, Katon W, Langa KM. The association of depression, cognitive impairment without dementia, and dementia with risk of ischemic stroke: A cohort study. *Psychosomatic Medicine*. 2015; 77(2): 200-208.

Langa KM, Larson E, Crimmins E, Faul J, Levine D, Kabeto M, Weir D. A comparison of the prevalence of dementia in the United States in 2000 and 2012. *JAMA Internal Medicine*. 2017; 177(1): 51-58.

Wei M, Kabeto M, Langa KM, Mukamal K. Multimorbidity and physical and cognitive function: performance of a new multimorbidity-weighted index. *J Gerontol A Biol Sci Med Sci*. 2018; 73(2): 225-232.

Table 1. Cut-points on the self-respondent 27-point scale and proxy-respondent cognitive scales

Cognitive Function	Self Respondent	Proxy Respondent	
	27-point scale (1995 onward)	9-point Scale 1995 – 1998	11-point Scale (2000 onward)
Normal	12 – 27	0 – 2	0 – 2
CIND	7 – 11	3 – 4	3 – 5
Demented	0 – 6	5 – 9	6 – 11

Variable	Label
numiadl_impX	NUMIADLs
imparate_impX	Interviewer assessment of proxy
memoryp_impX	Proxy Assessment of Memory
fimrc_impX	IMPFLAG: IMMEDIATE WORD RECALL
fdlrc_impX	IMPFLAG: DELAYED WORD RECALL
fser7_impX	IMPFLAG: SERIAL 7S
fbwc20_impX	IMPFLAG: BACKWARDS COUNT FROM 20
imrc_impX	IMMEDIATE WORD RECALL
dlrc_impX	DELAYED WORD RECALL
ser7_impX	SERIAL 7S
bwc20_impX	BACKWARDS COUNT FROM 20
cogtot27_impX	TICS-m 27-point scale
proxyX	PROXY TYPE STATUS
cogfunctionX	Cognition Category: 1=Normal, 2=CIND, 3=Demented
fnumiadl_impX	IMPFLAG: NUMIADLs
fmemoryp_impX	IMPFLAG: Proxy Assessment of Memory
fimparate_impX	IMPFLAG: Interviewer assessment of proxy
prxyscore_impX	Total: Proxy Score (<2000 0-9; >=2000 0-11)
intrviewX	Interviewed this Wave

X=1995, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 & 2014. For imparate_impX and fimparate_impX, we have for 2000, 2002, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012 & 2014

SAS code to reshape data from wide to long format

```
/**Macro to reshape data from wide to long format*/

libname cog "C:\DATA\Ahead_hrs\Cognitive function\data\";

data work.cognidata;
  set cog.cognfinalimp_9514wide;
run;

%macro cognl(year);
  data work.cogd&year (keep= hhid pn studyyr numiadl_imp imparate_imp memoryp_imp fimrc_imp fdlrc_imp
fser7_imp fbwc20_imp imrc_imp dlrc_imp
  ser7_imp bwc20_imp cogtot27_imp proxy cogfunction fnumiadl_imp fmemoryp_imp fimparate_imp
prxyscore_imp intrview);
  set work.cognidata;
  if intrview&year=1;
  studyyr=&year;
  rename numiadl_imp&year=numiadl_imp imparate_imp&year=imparate_imp
  memoryp_imp&year=memoryp_imp fimrc_imp&year=fimrc_imp
  fdlrc_imp&year=fdlrc_imp fser7_imp&year=fser7_imp fbwc20_imp&year=fbwc20_imp imrc_imp&year=imrc_imp
dlrc_imp&year=dlrc_imp
  ser7_imp&year=ser7_imp bwc20_imp&year=bwc20_imp cogtot27_imp&year=cogtot27_imp proxy&year=proxy
cogfunction&year=cogfunction fnumiadl_imp&year=fnumiadl_imp
  fmemoryp_imp&year=fmemoryp_imp fimparate_imp&year=fimparate_imp prxyscore_imp&year=prxyscore_imp
intrview&year=intrview;
  run;
%mend;

%cognl(1995); %cognl(1996); %cognl(1998); %cognl(2000); %cognl(2002); %cognl(2004); %cognl(2006);
%cognl(2008); %cognl(2010); %cognl(2012); %cognl(2014);

data work.cognfinalimp_9514long;
  set work.cogd1995 work.cogd1996 work.cogd1998 work.cogd2000 work.cogd2002 work.cogd2004 work.cogd2006
work.cogd2008 work.cogd2010 work.cogd2012 work.cogd2014;

label      numiadl_imp          ="`num': NUMIADLs"
           imparate_imp        ="Interviewer assessment of proxy"
           memoryp_imp         ="Proxy Assessment of Memory"
           fimrc_imp           ="IMPFLAG: IMMEDIATE WORD RECALL"
           fdlrc_imp           ="IMPFLAG: DELAYED WORD RECALL"
           fser7_imp           ="IMPFLAG: SERIAL 7S"
```

```
fbwc20_imp          ="IMPFLAG: BACKWARDS COUNT FROM 20"  
imrc_imp            ="IMMEDIATE WORD RECALL"  
dlrc_imp            ="DELAYED WORD RECALL"  
ser7_imp            ="SERIAL 7S"  
bwc20_imp           ="BACKWARDS COUNT FROM 20"  
cogtot27_imp        ="TICS-m 27-point scale"  
proxy               ="PROXY TYPE STATUS"  
cogfunction         ="Cognition Category: 1=Normal, 2=CIND, 3=Demented"  
fnumiadl_imp        ="IMPFLAG: NUMIADLs"  
fmemoryp_imp        ="IMPFLAG: Proxy Assessment of Memory"  
fimparate_imp       ="IMPFLAG: Interviewer assessment of proxy"  
prxyscore_imp       ="Total: Proxy Score (<2000 0-9; >=2000 0-11)"  
intrview            ="Interviewed this Wave"  
studyyr             ="Study year";
```

```
run;
```