

HEALTH AND RETIREMENT STUDY

**SSA Permissions Consent History: 1992-2012
(Public Version)**

Data Description and Usage

Version 5, November 2015

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1. Overview and Acknowledgments

The Health and Retirement Study (HRS) is a national longitudinal study of the economic, health, marital, and family status, as well as public and private support systems, of older Americans. The HRS is a rich source of longitudinal, cross-sectional data for researchers and policymakers who study aging. Funding for the Health and Retirement Study is provided by the National Institute on Aging at NIH (U01 AG009740), with supplemental support from the Social Security Administration. The study is conducted by the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at the University of Michigan.

2. Setup

By downloading this freely provided data set, you agree to use its contents only for research and statistical purposes, making no effort to identify the respondents. You also agree to inform HRS of any papers, publications, or presentations based on this data set. Please send a copy of such publications in PDF format via e-mail to hqsquestions@umich.edu with "Attn: Papers and Publications" in the subject line. If you wish, you may include a bibliographical reference.

As an alternative, you may transmit publications in paper format by postal mail:

Health and Retirement Study
Attn: Papers and Publications
The Institute for Social Research, Room 3410
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106-1248

2a. Distribution Set

The *SSA Permissions Consent History(Public)* data set is packaged for distribution in a ZIP file, `conssa.zip`. Extract the data file, the program statement file that matches your analysis environment, the data description (this file), and the codebook file. If you require a special file format or experience system problems, please contact the [HRS Help Desk](#). If all files are decompressed, they will require approximately 23MB of free space on your storage device.

2a-1. Windows Environment

Copy the ZIP file to the Windows folder where you plan to do your work. Use Windows Explorer or a third-party file compression/decompression tool such as **WinZIP** or **7-zip** to extract the ZIP folder contents. The output will be the files listed in Table 1.

2a-2. UNIX Environment

Copy the ZIP file to the folder where you plan to do your work. Use the ZIP file decompression software installed on your system, (e.g. **7-zip**, **gunzip**) to decrypt and extract the ZIP folder contents. The output will be the files listed in Table 1.

2a-3. Macintosh OS X Environment (10.4.x and above)

Copy the ZIP file to the folder where you plan to do your work. Use **Stuffit-Expander** to decrypt and extract the ZIP folder contents. The output will be the files listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Contents of Distribution Package

Directory¹	File	Type
c:\conssap\	CONSENTSSAP.zip	zip file
c:\conssap\docs\	CONSENTSSAP.txt	Codebook files (ASCII text)
c:\conssap\data\	CONSENTSSAP.da	Data files (ASCII text)
c:\conssap\sas\	CONSENTSSAP.sas	SAS program statements
c:\conssap\spss\	CONSENTSSAP.sps	SPSS program statements
c:\conssap\stata\	CONSENTSSAP.dct/ CONSENTSSAP.do	Stata dictionary and "do" files

2b. Program Statements

ASCII data files are distributed with associated SPSS, SAS or Stata program statements to read the data and create a system files. Files containing SPSS statements are named with an .sps extension, those with SAS statements with an .sas extension, and those with Stata statements with .do and .dct extensions. The ASCII data file for this distribution set is keyed on Household Identifier, and Person Number.

2b-1. Using the Files with SAS

To create a SAS system file for a particular data set, two file types must be present for that data set -- .sas program statement files and .da data files. To create a SAS system file, load the *.sas file into the SAS Program Editor. If the *.sas file is located in "c:\conssap\sas" and the data file is located in "c:\conssap\data", you can run the file as is. A SAS system file (*.sd2, assuming that you are using SAS V6.12) will be saved to directory "c:\conssap\sas". If the files are not located in the specified directories, you will need to edit the *.SAS file to reflect the proper path names prior to running the file.

2b-2. Using the Files with SPSS

To create an SPSS system file for a particular data set, two file types must be present for that data set -- .sps program statement files and .da data files. To create an SPSS system file, open the *.sps file in SPSS as an SPSS Syntax File. If the *.sps file is located in "c:\conssap\spss" and the data file is located in "c:\conssap\data", you can run the file as is. An SPSS system file (*.sav) will be saved to directory "c:\conssap\spss". If the files are not located in the specified directories, you will need to edit the *.sps file to reflect the proper path names prior to running the file.

2b-3. Using the Files with Stata

To use Stata with a particular data set, the following three file types must be present for that data set -- .dct files, .do files, and .da data files. Files with the suffix ".da" contain the raw data for Stata to read. Files with the suffix ".dct" are Stata dictionaries used by Stata to describe the data. Files with the suffix ".do" are short Stata programs ("do files") which you may use to read in the data. Load the .do file into Stata and then submit it. If the *.do and .dct files are located in "c:\conssap\stata" and the data file is located in "c:\conssap\data", you can run the .do file as is.

¹ While a specific folder arrangement is not required for using HRS files, we have traditionally suggested a directory structure for the Windows environment. By using this directory structure (or a Unix equivalent), you will not have to change the path name references in your data descriptor files. If you use a different structure, just change the directory references in the program files.

If the files are not located in these directories, you must edit the *.do and *.dct files to reflect the proper path names before you run the files.

3. File Content

This version of the *SSA Permissions Consent History (Public)* summarizes available information relating to the status of social security permissions for 38,006 HRS respondents.² The data set contains summary information by wave for permissions requested from 1992 through 2012. For each wave in which respondents were asked to grant HRS access to earnings and benefits held by the SSA, status variables were constructed as described in Table 2.

Table 2: Code Frame

xASK	0	self-interview, not asked
	1	self-interview, asked
	.	no interview in wave
xCON	0	asked, consent not given for anything
	1	asked, consent given
	9	not asked (xASK ne 1)
xSENT	0	nothing sent to SSA
	1	in finder
	9	no consent (xCON = 0 or 9)
xMODE	0	interviewed by phone
	1	interviewed in person
	9	Not in sample this wave or interview not obtained

² This data set is based on the final version (March 2015, v1.0) of the 2012 Public Tracker File.

4. If You Need to Know More

This document is intended to serve as a brief overview and to provide guidelines for using this data product. If you have questions or concerns that are not adequately covered here or on our Web site, or if you have any comments, please contact us. We will do our best to provide answers.

4a. HRS Internet Site

Health and Retirement Study public release data and additional information about the study are available on the Internet. To access the data and other relevant information, point your Web browser to the HRS Web site at <http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/>.

4b. Contact Information

If you need to contact us, you may do so by one of the methods listed below.

Internet: [Help Desk](#) at our Web site

E-mail: hqsquestions@umich.edu

Postal Service:

Health and Retirement Study

The Institute for Social Research, Room 3050

The University of Michigan

P.O. Box 1248

Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248