

New Experimental Modules for HRS 2016 Invited

The HRS investigators welcome suggestions for experimental modules from the research community for the 2016 wave of HRS. Ideas for modules should be sent to the committee on experimental modules at the address below. You may provide specific survey questions if you wish, though this is not necessary; just the basic analytic idea, with some indications of the variables that the module should try to measure, is sufficient. It is also helpful to include references to recent publications on the topic, other studies that have treated the topic, names of persons familiar with the topic, or specific survey instruments. Priority will be given to modules that enhance HRS content to provide the greatest overall benefit to the research community. All modules must conform to the same overall design limitations (described below). Module data are released to the public at the same time as all other data from that survey wave (typically by June of the year after data collection). The HRS investigators will make the final decision about which modules to include in each wave of interviews.

Experimental modules are administered to randomly-selected sub-samples of HRS self-respondents, after the main interview is completed, with a **strict limit of two to three minutes** in average length. Each respondent is randomly assigned to one and only one module. Respondents can refuse to participate in any module before assignment, and can refuse to answer questions in the module to which they are randomly assigned, but interviewers cannot offer nor can respondents choose to respond to a module other than the one selected at random. The sample size for each module depends on the number of modules included. In 2014 there are 11 experimental modules divided among an estimated 18,200 self-respondents, yielding an average of about 1,650 persons asked to do each module. Response rates to modules have averaged about 85-90% in recent waves, which would leave about 1,400-1,500 responses in each module.

In order to preserve the random selection of participants in all modules, it is essential that each module be appropriate for both telephone and face-to-face modes and that it be designed for the entire HRS sample. Modules that target specific groups by age, sex, health status, or any other variable do not fit well within this structure. If one module were asked of all 51-56 year olds, for example, then the other modules would not represent that age group, with negative consequences for all of them. It is possible, however, to construct different sequences of questions for different groups within a module. For example, a module about cancer knowledge could ask women about breast cancer and men about prostate cancer. Also note that because individual respondents are assigned randomly, it is not possible to require husbands and wives to answer the same module.

The timetable for module development for the 2016 interview wave is as follows:

- January 19, 2015: Proposals due
- February 23, 2015: Final selection by HRS co-investigators
- May 4, 2015: Final question text and specifications due
- July 2017: Estimated preliminary release of data from HRS 2016

Proposals for modules can be sent via e-mail to: hqsquestions@umich.edu. Please include the word "module" as the first word in your subject heading. If you prefer to submit written proposals, they may be sent to:

HRS Committee on Experimental Modules
Institute for Social Research
University of Michigan
426 Thompson St., Rm. 3464
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1284

If you have any questions, please contact the Help Desk, or send e-mail to hqsquestions@umich.edu