

## Benefits of the IHIS

- Reduces costs of research by minimizing initial investments in data preparation
- Simplifies access to data across multiple years and data files (core survey and supplements)
- Facilitates consistent comparisons across four decades of dramatic change in public health
- Documents changes in concepts and comparability issues

## IHIS Collaborators

### State Health Access

#### Data Assistance Center

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# INTEGRATED HEALTH INTERVIEW SERIES

Harmonizing the leading source  
of information on the health  
of the U.S. population

## INTEGRATED HEALTH INTERVIEW SERIES

50 Willey Hall  
225 19th Ave South  
Minneapolis, MN 55455  
612-624-5818

1969 - present

National Health Interview Survey  
Data and Documentation

[www.ihis.us](http://www.ihis.us)

## Integrated Health Interview Series

The Integrated Health Interview Series (IHIS) is a harmonized set of data from nearly 40 years (1969-present) of the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS). The NHIS is the principal source of information on the health of the U.S. population, covering such topics as general health status, the distribution of acute and chronic illness, functional limitations, access to and use of medical services, insurance coverage, and health behaviors (such as exercise, diet, and tobacco and alcohol consumption). On average, the survey covers 100,000 persons in 45,000 households each year.

The IHIS facilitates cross-time comparisons of these invaluable survey data by coding variables identically across time. With IHIS microdata (information about individual persons and households), researchers can use their desired set of variables to create tabulations and multivariate analyses tailored to their particular questions.

The IHIS also provides detailed documentation covering comparability issues for each harmonized variable and an interactive data extraction system. IHIS data are distributed for free over the internet to any person who agrees to follow the responsible use guidelines set by the National Center for Health Statistics.

## Current IHIS Data Release

The IHIS currently contains over 1000 integrated variables. Accompanying web-based documentation provides, for each harmonized variable, information about:

- Years available
- Variable universe
- Interpretation of the variable
- Comparability issues
- Codes (values and value labels) and frequencies for each year

Other useful features include:

- On-line user notes discussing sample designs, the use of weights, and variance estimation
- Guidance on linking IHIS data to additional variables from the original public use files of the NHIS
- A data extraction system enabling users to create extracts with only the years and variables they require
- User support to help users encountering problems with the IHIS extract system, data, or documentation

**E-mail questions to  
[ihis@pop.umn.edu](mailto:ihis@pop.umn.edu)**

## Future IHIS Data Releases

Future IHIS data releases will occur once or twice per year. With each release, additional variables from the core files, the sample adult/sample child files, and survey supplements will be added to the IHIS database.

The next IHIS release, planned for fall 2008, will:

- More than double the number of harmonized variables
- Add new variables on such topics as cancer screening, cancer family history, exercise, food and vitamin intake, alternative health care, adult mental illness, and quitting smoking
- Add variables from the newly-created NHIS public use file for 1968
- Include variables from the linked public use mortality files for 1986-2000
- Provide on-line questionnaire text linked to corresponding variable descriptions

Planned IHIS website innovations include:

- On-line worked examples using IHIS data to study health and health care over time, particularly in light of survey design changes
- On-line tabulation capability
- Tools for searching names, labels, and descriptions to identify variables relevant to a researcher's own project

*Updated August, 2008*