

## Integrated Health Interview Series

The Integrated Health Interview Series (IHIS) is a harmonized set of data for over 40 years (1969-2009) 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

The IHIS currently contains approximately 7,000 integrated variables from 1969 to 2009. Accompanying web-based documentation provides, for each harmonized variable, information about:

- Years available
- Variable universe
- Interpretation of the variable
- Comparability issues
- Codes and frequencies for each year
- Guidance on which weights to use

Other useful features include:

- On-line user notes discussing sample designs, weights, and variance estimation
- Guidance on linking IHIS data to additional variables in the NHIS public use files or additional geographic detail through RDCs
- A data extraction system enabling users to create extracts with only the years and variables they require
- On-line questionnaire text linked to corresponding variable descriptions
- Variable search tool
- User support to help users encountering problems

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

## Recent IHIS Developments

In fall of 2009, funding for the IHIS project was renewed for an additional five years.

Variable groups recently made available include:

- Survivorship of survey participants
- Cancer family history
- Adult mental health problems, including panic attacks, depression, and generalized anxiety disorder
- Child emotional problems
- Adult physical activity
- Use of complementary and alternative medicine
- Health-related computer use
- Falls and balance problems
- Hearing problems and aids
- Vision problems
- HPV knowledge and vaccination
- STDs
- Hypertension

## Educational Use

IHIS data are well-suited to classroom use, on topics ranging from statistics to public health, even at the undergraduate level. Using the new online tabulator, researchers or students can create weighted frequencies, tables, and means for IHIS variables quickly and without use of a statistical package.

## 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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