

What's New in Version I of the RAND HRS?

Version I incorporates the Final Release V2 for 2006. It also makes adjustments and corrections. The current versions of the core data used in Version I are:

- 1992 Final V1.01
- 1993 Final V2.1
- 1994 Final V1.0¹
- 1995 Final V2.0
- 1996 Final V4.0
- 1998 Final V2.3
- 2000 Final V1.0²
- 2002 Final V2.0
- 2004 Final V1.0
- 2006 Final Release V2.0
- Tracker 2006 V1.0 (October 2007)
- 2004 Geographic Region Information, also known as Cross-Wave Region and Mobility File V1.0 (May 2007)
- Master ID File V4 (October 2008)

We have made the following adjustments, improvements, and corrections to the data and documentation:

- **Medicare Part D indicator:** We have added a variable R8MPARTD that indicates whether the respondent enrolled in Medicare Part D, and if so, whether drug use changed or stayed the same. We actually added this variable in Version H but now document it in the codebook, in the section describing medical expenditures.
- **Change in wealth including second home:** We added variables for the cross-wave change in total wealth including a second home. HwATOTBC is available for Wave 2 and from Wave 5 forward and is derived as the difference between total wealth including second home (HwATOTB) in the current and prior waves. We actually added these variables in Version H but now document it in the codebook, along with other change in wealth variables.
- **Correction to total years worked:** An omission of an early job history variable lead to an underestimate of total years worked for Waves 7 and 8 (R7JYEARS, R8JYEARS). The problem primarily affected those in the Early Baby Boomer (EBB) cohort. This has been corrected in Version I.

¹ Beginning in Version F, we drop respondents from the 1994 HRS publicly distributed files who are flagged as deceased on the Tracker file. 175 of these 176 dropped cases were actually exit interviews rather than core interviews. The exit interviews were flagged with INW2=2 in prior versions.

² We have deleted one case from the 2000 V1.0 file, who was later discovered to be a roommate rather than a partner, according to HRS (January 28, 2005 Data Alert). This case was included in the early release of 2002 but dropped in the final release. We have also changed the HHIDPN for one case from 75573041 to 75573010 according to HRS (November 21, 2005 Data Alert), and adjusted the appropriate spouse ID.

- **Disability application and receipt:** A problem was discovered in Version H with Wave 7 and 8 disability application status (R7DSTAT and R8DSTAT). This also affected some of the disability episode variables. The problem affected about 700 cases in the RwdSTAT variable and about 200 cases in the episode variables. The correction to the problem is incorporated here. In addition, we reviewed and modified the disability episode programs for clarity and consistency. This corrected some previously undiscovered errors. Improvements have been made to variables on receipt of disability (RADIGET, RADIGETM, RADIGETY), and to disability episode variables (RADNEPI, RADSTAT1-7, and RADTYPE1-7).
- **Labor force status:** We made improvements to labor force status in cases where the numbers of hours and weeks usually worked were missing or zero. Previously we had assumed full-time work status. We modified this assumption, so that if the respondent mentions retirement we assign a status of “partly retired”, and if hours or weeks worked is reported as zero we assign a status of “working part time”. This change affects 20 to 100 cases per wave. We also made some minor adjustments to the way we handle usual hours and weeks worked on a second job when they are missing so that Ahead and other cohorts are now being treated consistently.
- **Miscellaneous:** Small corrections have been made to income and asset imputations and job characteristics. Professional occupation is one of the covariates used in the income and asset imputations. The occupation codes in 2006 use the 2000 Census codes where the 1980 codes had been used in prior waves. We adjusted the coding of this covariate to accommodate the new codes. Details are described in a footnote in the “Wealth and Imputations” section, under “Covariates.” For job characteristics, we adjusted special missing values to indicate cases missing this information because the interview was by proxy or because the information was not available to be brought forward from a prior wave.

We have also revised Appendix A in this document, which lists details of special cases and effects of changes and corrections.

The RAND/HRS data project is committed to producing high quality data for analysis. To this end, we have employed many innovative programming and quality assurance techniques including paired peer programming, standardized macros, and independent review. If you do, however, notice any undocumented discrepancies or apparent problems with the data, please let us know by e-mailing us (randhrshelp@rand.org).

Though we have attempted to derive measures that are consistent across waves, the underlying HRS data do not always allow this. Some of the native inconsistencies are present in our derived measures, but should be documented in detail in this codebook. Before using any measure comparatively across interview years, please be sure to read the variable description in this codebook carefully, particularly the sections on “How Constructed” and “Cross Wave Differences in the Original HRS Data” that are included for each variable. If there are cross wave differences that we have not documented, please let us know (randhrshelp@rand.org).

In the future we plan to implement the following changes and additions:

- **Total Medical Expenditure Brackets:** In Version F we added the reported total medical expenditure brackets as categorical variables for Waves 3 to 6 (RwTOTMB), and a version of this variable that imputes complete brackets when needed (RwTOTMBI). The question about total medical expenditures is not asked in Wave 7. The continuous total medical expenditures are imputed in this version of the RAND HRS up to Wave 6, but *we plan to drop these imputations* in future releases due to concerns about the quality of the imputations based on limited information. We will continue to impute out-of-pocket expenses.
- **Improvement to Income and Wealth Imputations:** *The improvements to the income and wealth imputations made for Version H have been applied only in Wave 8.* We examined trends over time to assess the compatibility with imputations in earlier waves, and found that the trends (e.g., increases or decreases in income and wealth components) made sense. However, we plan to implement these improvements to prior waves in coming releases.

(Last updated 3/1/2009)