RAND SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

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The Health and Retirement Study (HRS) is a longitudinal household survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan with funding from the National Institute on Aging (grant numbers NIA U01AG009740 and NIA R01AG073289) and the Social Security Administration. The HRS is extraordinarily rich and complex, and its multidisciplinary data provide researchers the opportunity to investigate many different aspects related to population aging in the United States. With the goal of making the data more accessible to researchers, the RAND Center for the Study of Aging, with funding and support from the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the Social Security Administration (SSA), has created the RAND HRS data products. This document describes the RAND HRS Exit Files. For citation instructions, please see the RAND HRS Citation Instructions webpage.

RAND HRS Exit/Post-Exit Interview Files and the RAND HRS Exit/Post-Exit Finder File

1. HRS Exit Interviews

An Exit Interview is attempted with a "proxy informant" for panel members who have died. To the greatest extent possible, proxy informants are knowledgeable about the health, family, and financial situation of the deceased (often the proxy is a widow, widower, or some other family member). The content of the Exit interview is similar to the Core (or living) interview. As such, the Exit data are amenable to answering researchers' questions concerning medical care, expenditures, how assets are distributed following death, and family decision-making during the latter part of life.

2. HRS Post-Exit Interviews

The Post-Exit Interview is designed to augment information on a given deceased Respondent who had a proxy report in a prior Exit Interview. Data are obtained by doing telephone interviews with proxy informants for deceased Respondents who had unresolved financial situations at the time of the Exit Interview (Wills and Trusts, and Estate). As with the Exit Interview, to the extent possible, proxy informants are knowledgeable about the financial situation of the deceased (often the proxy is a widow, widower, or some other family member). However, the proxy informants in the Post-Exit may or may not be the same person who provided information in the prior Exit interview.

The sample for the Post-Exit Interviews was drawn from HRS Exit Interviews based on the following criteria:

- If the deceased Respondent owned a home at his/her last interview, and if the home had not been disposed of at the time of the Exit Interview.

  OR

- If the deceased Respondent left a will, and it had not yet been probated at the time of the Exit interview.

  OR

- If the deceased Respondent's other assets and possessions had not yet been distributed at the time of the Exit Interview.

In general, the samples for the Post-Exit Interviews are drawn from the previous two waves of HRS Exit Interviews. For example, the sample for the 2014 Post-Exit Interviews was drawn from HRS Exit Interviews that occurred in 2010 and 2012.

In addition, for Respondents who were included in a previous Post-Exit sample, and some or all of the above were not settled, s/he can also be part of the Post-Exit sample. For example, nine Respondents in the HRS 1998 Exit Interview were in the Post-Exit samples for 2000, 2002 and 2004.

3. What's included in the RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Interview files

The RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Interview Files include all of the Respondent-level sections, but not the sections that are collected at other levels, such as G: Functional Limitations and Helpers (Helper). In 2018 the following sections from the Exit Interview are included:

PR: Preload
A: Coverscreen
B: Demographics
C: Physical Health
D: Cognition
E: Family Structure and Transfers
G: Functional Limitations and Helpers
J: Employment
N: Health Services and Insurance
T: Wills and Life Insurance
IO: Interviewer Observations
Y: Time Calculations

And the following sections from the Post-Exit Interview are included through 2016:

PR: Preload
A: Coverscreen
T: Wills and Life Insurance

4. How does RAND combine the Exit and Post-Exit data?

The structure of the HRS Exit and Post-Exit Interview variable names is very similar. For example, the variable that contains the net value of the estate in the 2014 Exit Interview is called YT173, and the same question in the 2014 Post-Exit Interview is called Y**P**T173.

Where appropriate, we have removed the second letter "P" from the Post-Exit variable names so that we can append the Post-Exit Interview data to the Exit Interview data. For example, in 2014 data, we have removed the "P" from the variable YPT173 in the Post-Exit interview so that it has become YT173. Post-Exit Interview responses can be identified by the flag POST_EXIT=1. Exit Interview responses can be identified by POST_EXIT=0. The RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Interview Files include all Respondents from both the Exit and Post-Exit Interviews. However, the same person never has both an Exit Interview and Post-Exit Interview in the same year, so the file does not contain multiple occurrences of the same person.

We have also added numeric versions of household and person identifiers, such as HHIDPN, to facilitate matching across years and merging with other RAND HRS data products.

5. RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Finder file for merging across years

Researchers would most likely want to combine the information from Exit and Post-Exit Interview and link them up with Respondents' Core Interviews. We have created the RAND HRS Exit/Post-Exit Finder File to make it easy to identify which survey years the Exit and Post-Exit Interviews occurred. The file contains the following variables to identify the Respondent's Exit Interview and Post-Exit Interview years.

Description	Variable Name in *RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Finder File*	Notes
HRS Household ID + Person Number (Num)	HHIDPN	RAND HRS unique identifier (Num), included in the *RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Interview Finder File* to facilitate merging.
HRS Exit Year (Num)	EXIT1	Exit Interview
HRS Exit 2nd Year (Num)	EXIT2	Second Exit Interview
HRS Post-Exit 1st Year (Num)	POSTEXIT1	First Post-Exit Interview
HRS Post-Exit 2nd Year (Num)	POSTEXIT2	Second Post-Exit Interview
HRS Post-Exit 3rd Year (Num)	POSTEXIT3	Third Post-Exit Interview

We derived the Exit and Post-Exit variables from the Tracker file variable xIWTYPE (Interview Type), where x=Survey Year letter. The EXIT1 variable contains the year the Exit Interview was conducted. The EXIT2 variable contains the year a second Exit interview was administered, in error, to two Respondents. (HHIDPN = 11863010 and 203802010)
The variables POSTEXIT1-POSTEXIT3 contain the years Post-Exit Interviews were conducted. If you merge all the Respondents in, say 1992, with the RAND HRS Exit/Post-Exit Finder File, by HHIDPN, and they are missing values in, say EXIT1, this means that these Respondents do not have an Exit interview.

Once you have identified the years of Exit and Post-Exit Interviews using the RAND HRS Exit/Post-Exit Finder file, you can easily merge individual Exit/Post-Exit Fat Files together using HHIDPN. While it is easy to merge the data using our unique identifier HHIDPN, users should be aware of the following:

a). Variable names and values can change over time. Researchers need to check both the Exit Interview codebook and the Post-Exit Interview codebook to make sure you are comparing similar measures.

b). There can be valid information in both the Exit and Post-Exit Interviews, and this information may not always agree; it is up to researchers to decide which value or combination of values to use in their analysis.

c). There is a time lag between the Exit and Post-Exit Interviews. Again, it is up to researchers to decide what values to use in their analysis. For example, there may be a house valuation in the 2008 Exit Interview and another in the 2014 Post-Exit Interview.

d). The proxy informant who responded to the Exit Interview may not be the same person as the proxy informant who responded to the Post-Exit Interview. There are variables in both the Exit and Post-Exit Interviews describing the relationship of the proxy to the deceased Respondent.

For more information about Exit and Post-Exit Interviews, please visit the HRS website in the Data Descriptions area under the documentation tab.

6. Additions and Changes to the Public Release HRS Data

The RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Interview Files only include Respondent-level modules. We have added numeric versions of both household and person identifiers to facilitate matching across years and merging with other RAND HRS data products. We have also added a POST_EXIT flag, where a value of "1" identifies the Post-Exit Interview responses and a value of "0" identifies Exit Interview responses. Please see Tables 1 and 2 (below) for additional information.

Table 1. Identifier Variables: Not Wave-Specific

Description	Tracker Variable Name in *RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Interview File*	Notes
HRS Household ID (Num)	HHIDN	ID Fields are provided in both numeric (Num) and character (Char) format. HRS provides IDs in character format, but numeric formats are included in the *RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Interview File* to facilitate merging with data from previous waves.
HRS Household ID (Char)	HHID	
HRS Household ID + Person Number (Num)	HHIDPN	
HRS Household ID + Person Number (Char)	RAHHIDPN	
Person Number (Num)	PNN	
Person Number (Char)	PN	
HRS Exit or Post-Exit Interview (Num)	POST_EXIT	1=Post-Exit Interview 0=Exit Interview

Table 2. Identifier Variables: Wave-Specific

Description	HRS 2014 Variable	Notes
2012 Core Sub-Household ID	NSUBHHN (Num)	ID Fields are provided in both numeric (Num) and character (Char) format. HRS provides IDs in character format, but numeric formats are included in the *RAND HRS Exit and Post-Exit Interview File* to facilitate merging with data from previous waves.
	NSUBHH (Char)	
2012 Core Household ID	NHHIDN (Num) = (HHIDx10) + NSUBHHN	
	NHHID (Char) = HHID concatenated with NSUBHH	
2014 Exit and Post-Exit Sub-Household ID	YSUBHHN (Num)	
	YSUBHH (Char)	
2014 Exit and Post-Exit Household ID	YHHIDN (Num) = (HHIDx10) + YSUBHHN	
	YHHID (Char) = HHID concatenated with YSUBHH	