

HEALTH AND RETIREMENT STUDY

Cross-wave Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma

Aggregated Data

Data Description

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Version 1.0

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- Make no attempts to identify study participants.
- Not to transfer HRS Public Release data to any third party other than staff or students for whom you are directly responsible except as indicated below.
- Not to allow others to use your username and password to access this site.
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- To include the following citation in any research reports, papers, or publications based on Public Release data:

In text:

"The HRS (Health and Retirement Study) is sponsored by the National Institute on Aging (grant number NIA U01AG009740) and is conducted by the University of Michigan."

In references:

"Health and Retirement Study, 2022 HRS Early Core public use dataset. Produced and distributed by the University of Michigan with funding from the National Institute on Aging (grant number NIA U01AG009740). Ann Arbor, MI, (year)."

- To include the following citation in any research reports, papers, or publications based on any Public Release data file tagged as "Early" or "Preliminary":

"This analysis uses Early Release data from the Health and Retirement Study, 2022 HRS Early Core, sponsored by the National Institute on Aging (grant number NIA U01AG009740) and conducted by the University of Michigan. These data have not been cleaned and may contain errors that will be corrected in the Final Public Release version of the dataset."

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- Provide information regarding any research product (dissertation, thesis, journal article, book, book chapter, report, etc.) based on data obtained from the Health and Retirement Study by sending an electronic copy to hrspublications@umich.edu.
- Report immediately to the Health and Retirement Study at hqsquestions@umich.edu any disclosure of study participant identity as well as any discovery of flaws or errors in the data or documentation files.
- Notify the Health and Retirement Study through use of the update function provided at this site or by electronic mail directed to hqsquestions@umich.edu of changes in your electronic mail address, postal address, telephone number, organizational affiliation or organizational status.

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1. Introduction

The cross-wave aggregated data on Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma consist of information derived from public-release data collected in the Health and Retirement Study (HRS), which is funded under a cooperative agreement between the National Institute on Aging (NIA) and the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. The HRS is designed to study labor force, health, and family transitions of the U.S. population aged 51 and older, and the impact of those transitions on economic resources, claims on structured programs such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid, and informal assistance and transfers to and from family members.

The National Institute on Aging provides funding (NIH U01 AGO9740) for collection of all HRS data, with supplemental support from the Social Security Administration. The Institute for Social Research (ISR) Survey Research Center (SRC) at the University of Michigan conducted the survey. Preparation of this cross-wave aggregated file by members of the HRS Life History project team was supported by funding from the National Institute on Aging (R01 AG051142).

By downloading this freely provided data set, you agree to use its contents for research and statistical purposes only and to make no effort to identify the respondents. In addition, you agree to send the citation for any reports, theses, or publications you produce based on the data. See Registration and Downloading the Data (Section 8 of this document) for additional details.

Data alerts, new file notifications, and updates concerning this file will be placed on the HRS Data Alert web page <http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu/alerts>.

2. General Information

The Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma data were aggregated using retrospective reports provided by HRS respondents or their proxy in different waves of biennial core panel interviews from 2006 to 2012 in the Psychosocial and Lifestyle Questionnaires (Leave Behind, LB) and in 2019 in off-years Life History Mail Surveys (LHMS). All information has previously been released for public use separately. All responses were collected through a self-administered questionnaire. Table 1 summarizes all variables and shows the various waves and questionnaires drawn on to create this aggregated file. As this table demonstrates, most respondents answered the questions in the context of LB questionnaires between 2006 and 2012 (for more information, see Smith et al., 2023, Psychosocial and Lifestyle Questionnaire 2006-2022; <https://hrs.isr.umich.edu/publications/biblio/12903>). Psychosocial information was obtained in each biennial wave from a rotating (random) 50% of the core panel participants who completed the enhanced face-to-face interview (EFTF), and the two panel subsamples are distinguished as Subsample A (begins in 2006) and Subsample B (begins in 2008). Therefore, some participants provided answers to lifecourse experiences of adversity and trauma items in two waves at four-year intervals: 2006 and 2010 (Subsample A), and 2008 and 2012 (Subsample B). After 2012, these constructs were moved to the off-year HRS Life History Mail Survey (LHMS), to be collected from each new HRS cohort. For example, data for participants in the Late Baby Boomer cohort recruited to the HRS panel in 2016, were collected in the 2019 Spring and Fall

LHMS. There are 3.86% of participants in the sample who, in addition of completing any of LB questionnaires, also answered the questions in the LHMS in 2019. The variable REPEATASK indicates those respondents who provided answers in the context of LHMS 2019 AND any of LB questionnaires from 2006 to 2012. In cases where respondents answered questions more than one time (either in the context of two waves of LB or in LB and LHMS), we selected the responses based on the type of questions. Specifically, for the childhood background questions (events occurred before age 18) we used responses from the first time they were provided by the respondents. For the questions about lifetime traumas that requested information about events occurred at any point in person's life, most recent responses were used. For example, if the respondents answered questions about relationships with their parents in 2008, 2012 and in 2019, responses from 2008 were selected. If the respondents answered question about major experiences of lifetime discrimination in 2006, 2010 and in 2019, responses from 2019 were selected. Responses given by the same respondent on different occasions available in the original sources (see Table 1).

The Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma data file contains 40 variables and includes 22,212 respondents.

2a. Childhood Experiences of Adversity (before age 18)

In 2006, the HRS began gathering information on childhood traumatic events and family functioning as part of the psychosocial self-administered questionnaire. Because the questionnaire was left with participants at the end of the enhanced face-to-face interview for them to complete, the questionnaire is referred as the Leave Behind (LB). The present aggregated data include nine questions about events and experiences occurred before age 18: respondents' evaluation of their relationships with parents (with mother and father; 2 items), maternal investment (mother gave attention, efforts and taught about life; 3 items), and 4 items about childhood traumatic events (e.g., trouble with police, parents' use of drugs). The responses to those 9 items that were collected from 2006 to 2012 in LB questionnaires as well as other questions about family financial background and childhood health from HRS core interviews were released in 2020 in the *Cross-wave Childhood Health and Family Aggregated* data (<https://hrs.isr.umich.edu/data-products/life-history>). In the current aggregated file, we added responses from the participants who entered HRS after the 2012 wave and were asked these questions in off-year Life History Mail Surveys (LHMS 2019). The question wording and instructions are the same in the LB questionnaires and LHMS. However, for two questions about relationships with mother and father there is a slight change in a response scale: 6-point scale in the LB questionnaires: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree; 6 = Does not Apply. In LHMS there is a 5-point scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly Agree; 6 = Does not Apply. During aggregation, we recoded 6-point scale responses collected in the LB questionnaires to be consistent with 5-point scale in LHMS by merging values from score 3 (Neither Agree nor Disagree) with score 2 (Disagree). As discussed above, when participants provided responses for the childhood background in multiple occasions, first time responses have been used in this aggregated data file.

2b. Lifecourse Traumas and Discrimination

For 14 items about lifecourse trauma (7 items) and major experiences of discrimination (7 items), participants were asked to indicate whether they experienced events at “*ANY POINT IN YOUR LIFE,*” and, if the event did happen, to provide the year in which it happened “*MOST RECENTLY.*” Questions about lifetime traumas cover family traumas (e.g., child died, family member’s drug addiction or life-threatening illnesses) and personal adverse experiences (been in natural disaster or combat zone; physical assault). Seven questions about major experiences of discrimination capture experiences of unfair treatment in job, housing, health care and banking. The questions about lifetime traumas were asked in Leave Behind Questionnaires (2006, 2008, 2010, 2012), and after 2012, these constructs were moved to the off-year HRS Life History Mail Survey (LHMS 2019). Citations for the source of items included in the HRS LB are provided in the Psychosocial and Lifestyle Questionnaire 2006-2022 User Guide (Smith et al., 2023; <https://hrs.isr.umich.edu/publications/biblio/12903>). The question wording, instructions, and scales are consistent between the LB questionnaires and LHMS. In cases of multiple responses, the most recent responses from the participants were included in the aggregated data file.

3. File Structure

The Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma aggregated data (Version 1.0) are at the respondent level. The data file contains one record for each respondent (N = 22,212) who provided at least one non-missing response to the included questions.

The data file is called AGGLFADVTR_R, which stands for Aggregated Lifecourse Adversity and Trauma, with the “_R” indicating that the file is at the respondent level.

The HRS primary identification variables (IDs) are:

HHID HRS HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFIER

PN HRS PERSON NUMBER IDENTIFIER

Records in the data files are sorted by HHID PN. Identification variables are stored in character format. Respondents’ HRS identifications (HHID and PN) correspondent to the 2020 Cross-waves Tracker file (Final, Version 1.0, January 2024).

4. Other HRS Resources for Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma

4.1. HRS Core

In the core surveys beginning in 1998, the HRS administered questions that gathered information on respondents’ family background when they were growing up, from birth to age 16, including questions about childhood family financial situation (e.g., family got financial help) and parental employment status. Those questions are administrated only once during the baseline interview and most participants answered them in their cohort enrollment years. The responses from 1998

to 2016 are included in the *Cross-wave Childhood Health and Family Aggregated* data (<https://hrs.isr.umich.edu/data-products/life-history>).

4.2. Life History Mail Survey (LHMS)

The Cross-wave 2015-2017 Life History Mail Survey (LHMS): Harmonized and Aggregated Public Data include data obtained in Fall 2015 and in Spring and Fall 2017 from respondents in different subsamples of the HRS panel (<https://hrsdata.isr.umich.edu/data-products/lhms-crosswave>). Life History data collected after 2017 is available in the publicly released data files LHMS 2019 Spring and LHMS 2019 Fall. Respondents reported about difficult experiences before age 16 (9 items), such as family life contexts (e.g., living in orphanage or foster home) and traumas (death of a parent or sibling), as well as exposure to stress-related events before age 50 (7 items: e.g., being imprisoned or homeless).

5. Distribution Files

The Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma aggregated data are provided as SAS (.sas7bdat), SPSS (.sav) and Stata (.dta) “ready-to-use” files and in ASCII format with fixed-length records. Use the associated SAS, SPSS or Stata program statements to read the data into the analysis package of your choice or use the available “ready-to-use” files. In addition, you may also download the codebook file (AGGLFADVTR_R.TXT) and the data description (this document).

The following extensions are used for the six different types of distribution files:

- .DA for data files,
- .SAS for SAS program statements and .sas7bdat for SAS “ready-to-use” files,
- .SPS for SPSS program statements and .sav for SPSS “ready-to-use” files,
- .DO for Stata DO statements and .dta for Stata “ready-to-use” files,
- .DCT for Stata dictionary statements, and
- .TXT for codebook files.

For example,

AGGLFADVTR_R.DA contains ASCII data

AGGLFADVTR_R.SAS contains corresponding SAS program statements,

AGGLFADVTR_R.SAS7BDAT contains SAS data in “ready-to-use” format,

AGGLFADVTR_R.SPS contains corresponding SPSS program statements,

AGGLFADVTR_R.SAV contains SPSS data in “ready-to-use” format,

AGGLFADVTR_R.DO contains corresponding Stata DO statements,

AGGLFADVTR_R.DTA contains Stata data in “ready-to-use” format,

AGGLFADVTR_R.DCT contains corresponding Stata dictionary statements, and

AGGLFADVTR_R.TXT contains the ASCII codebook

6. Program Statements

6a. Using the SAS Program Statements

To create a SAS system file for a particular dataset, two file types must be present for that dataset -- .SAS program statement files and .DA data files.

To create a SAS system file, load the *.SAS file into the SAS Program Editor.

If the *.SAS file is located in "c:\AGGLFADVTR_R\sas" and the data file is located in "c:\AGGLFADVTR_R\data", you can run the file as is. A SAS system file (*.SD2 or *.SAS7BDAT) will be saved to directory "c:\AGGLFADVTR_R\sas".

If the files are not located in the specified directories, you will need to edit the *.SAS file to reflect the proper path names prior to running the file.

6b. Using the SPSS Program Statements

To create an SPSS system file for a particular dataset, two file types must be present for that dataset -- .SPS program statement files and .DA data files.

To create an SPSS system file, open the *.SPS file in SPSS as an SPSS Syntax File.

If the *.SPS file is located in "c:\AGGLFADVTR_R\spss" and the data file is located in "c:\AGGLFADVTR_R\data", you can run the file as is. An SPSS system file (*.SAV) will be saved to directory "c:\AGGLFADVTR_R\spss".

If the files are not located in the specified directories, you will need to edit the *.SPS file to reflect the proper path names prior to running the file.

6c. Using the Stata Program Statements

To use Stata with a particular dataset, the following three file types must be present for that dataset -- .DCT files, .DO files, and .DA data files.

Files with the suffix .DA contain the raw data for Stata to read. Files with the suffix .DCT are Stata dictionaries used by Stata to describe the data. Files with the suffix .DO are short Stata programs ("do files") which you may use to read in the data. Load the .DO file into Stata and then submit it.

If the *.DO and *.DCT files are located in "c:\AGGLFADVTR_R\stata" and the data file is located in "c:\AGGLFADVTR_R\data", you can run the .DO file as is.

If the files are not located in these directories, you must edit the *.DO and *.DCT files to reflect the proper path names before you run the files.

Note that the variable names provided in the .DCT files are uppercase. If you prefer lower case variable names, you may wish to convert the .DCT files to lower case prior to use. You may do this by reading the .DCT file into a text or word processing program and changing the case. For instance in Microsoft Word, Edit, Select All, Format, Change Case, lowercase.

7. Linking Respondents across Time

Respondent records in the Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma aggregated data release can be linked to respondent records in other HRS data by HHID and PN.

8. Registration and Downloading the Data

8a. Registration

HRS data are available for free to researchers and analysts at the HRS Web site. In order to obtain public release data, you must first register at our Web site. Once you have completed the registration process, your username and password will be sent to you via e-mail. Your username and password are required to download data files.

Registered users receive user support, information related to errors in the data, future releases, workshops, and publication lists. The information you provide will not be used for any commercial use, and will not be redistributed to third parties.

8b. Conditions of Use

By registering, you agree to the [Conditions of Use](#) governing access to Health and Retirement public release data.

8c. Publications Based on Data

As part of the data registration process, you agree to include specified citations and to inform HRS of any papers, publications, or presentations based on HRS data. Please send a copy of any publications you produce based on HRS data, with a bibliographical reference, if appropriate, to the address below.

Health and Retirement Study
Attn: Papers and Publications
The Institute for Social Research
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, MI (USA) 48106-1248

Alternately, you may contact us by e-mail at hqsquestions@umich.edu with "Attn: Papers and Publications" in the subject line.

9. If You Need to Know More

This document is intended to serve as a brief overview and to provide guidelines to using the Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma aggregated release. Additional information about the HRS can be obtained from the HRS Web site. If you have questions or concerns that are not adequately covered here or on our Web site, please contact us. We will do our best to provide answers.

9a. HRS Internet Site

Health and Retirement Study public release data and additional information about the study are available on the Internet. To access the data and other relevant information, point your Web browser to the HRS Web site.

<http://hrsonline.isr.umich.edu>

9b. Contact Information

If you need to contact us, you may do so by one of the methods listed below.

Internet: Help Desk at our Web site

E-mail: hrsquestions@umich.edu

Postal service:
Health and Retirement Study
The Institute for Social Research
The University of Michigan
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248

FAX: (734) 647-1186

Appendix: Table 1. HRS Lifecourse Experiences of Adversity and Trauma Data: Cross-wave Sources

Variable Name	Variable Label	LB 2006	LB 2008	LB 2010	LB 2012	CFCH 2020	LHMS 2019
50% EFTF Subsample		A	B	A	B		
<i>Childhood Experiences of Adversity (before age 18)</i>							
RELWMO	Relationship with mother		X	X	X	X	X
RELWFA	Relationship with father		X	X	X	X	X
ATTENMO	Mother time and attention		X	X	X	X	X
EFFMO	Mother's effort		X	X	X	X	X
TEACHMO	How much did mother teach		X	X	X	X	X
SCHLOVER	Repeat year of school	X	X	X	X	X	X
TRPOLICE	Trouble with police		X	X	X	X	X
DRKDRUG	Parents drink or drugs	X	X	X	X	X	X
PHYABUSE	Parents physically abuse	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Lifetime Traumas (at any point in life)</i>							
*CHLDIED	At any point child die	X	X	X	X		X
*DISASTER	At any point major natural disaster	X	X	X	X		X
*COMBAT	At any point fired or fired upon in combat	X	X	X	X		X
*DRUGOTH	At any point spouse or child addiction	X	X	X	X		X
*ATTACK	At any point serious physical attack	X	X	X	X		X
*ILLSELF	At any point life-threatening illness or accident	X	X	X	X		X
*ILLOTH	At any point spouse or child life-threatening	X	X	X	X		X
<i>Major Experiences of Discrimination (at any point in life)</i>							
*DISMJOB	At any point unfairly dismissed from job	X	X	X	X		X
*NHIREJOB	At any point unfairly not hired for job	X	X	X	X		X
*DENPROM	At any point unfairly denied promotion	X	X	X	X		X
*PREVMOV	At any point unfairly denied housing	X	X	X	X		X
*DENLOAN	At any point unfairly denied bank loan	X	X	X	X		X
*UNFPOLICE	At any point unfair treatment by police	X	X	X	X		X
*DENCARE	At any point unfairly denied health care		X	X	X		X

Notes: LB = Section LB: Leave Behind Psychosocial Questionnaire (Respondent); CFCH = Childhood Family and Health Aggregated data; LHMS = Life History Mail Survey. For 14 lifetime trauma and discriminations events marked with * respondents were asked to provide year when the event occurred.