

Data Description
2011 Health Care Mail Survey (HCMS) (Version 2.0)

1. Introduction

The 2011 Health Care Mail Survey (HCMS) (Version 2.0) contains questions about health care, including access, utilization, policy, and veteran's health services.

The HRS 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 (NIA) provided funding (U01 AG009740) for the 2011 HCMS. The 2011 HCMS was conducted by the Survey Research Center (SRC), at the Institute for Social Research (ISR), at the University of Michigan.

By receiving the dataset, you agree to use it for research and statistical purposes only and make no effort to identify respondents. In addition, you agree to send us a copy of publications you produce based on the data. See Obtaining the Data (at the end of this document for additional details).

1. The Sample Interviewed in the 2011 HRS HCMS.

In December 2011, questionnaires were mailed to a subsample of HRS respondents (N=10,234). The field period for the 2011 HCMS was mid December 2011 through the end of May 2012. The subsample consisted of respondents who had given a 2010 core non-proxy interview on or before September 30, 2011 and who were not in the 2011 Consumption and Activities Mail Survey (CAMS). About 10% of randomly selected households were removed from the sample, and an additional 20% of households were selected from those who gave a core interview and who were not in the 2011 CAMS. In the 20% of households and among coupled households, one respondent was randomly chosen to receive a HCMS questionnaire and the other was excluded from the HCMS sample. The intent of the latter selection criteria was to allow for assessing if inclusion of both spouses and inclusion of one spouse affects participation in the subsequent Core wave of the HRS.

The data file for the HCMS contains data for 7,649 respondents. The simple response rate for the HCMS is 75 percent.

2. About the HCMS Data

2A. 2011 HRS HCMS Sections

The 2011 HCMS has the following sections:

- Section A Access to Health Care
- Section B Health Policy
- Section C Long-Term Care
- Section D Use of Senior Services/Programs
- Section E Veterans
- Section F Who answered the questions; questionnaire time; open comments

2B. Variable Names -

Variable names begin with the letters HC to designate Health Care [mail survey], followed by the section letter (in the following example is an A for section A), followed by the variable number (in the following example 01), followed by _11 for the wave in which the data were collected.

Example: HCA01_11 A1. RATE HEALTH

As the example further demonstrates, the variable label contains the question number found in the HCMS booklet or questionnaire.

2C. Data Quality

When respondents were supposed to answer a question but did not, we have tried to indicate the lack of a response by using a 9, 99, or 999 codes. If a respondent was not supposed to answer a questions (given the skip pattern instructions), their responses were retained in the data. The following is an example of using the 9 code to designate a question that was “skipped” when it was not supposed to be skipped.

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HCA01_11 A1. RATE HEALTH

Section: A Level: Respondent Type: Numeric Width: 1 Decimals: 0

Would you say your health is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor? Please mark only one.

.....

586	1. Excellent
2294	2. Very Good
2678	3. Good
1605	4. Fair
402	5. Poor
87	9. Answer not given

Blank. INAP (Inapplicable); MISSING

While cleaning the data, when extreme or unlikely values were encountered, copies of the questionnaires were checked to determine if errors were introduced during the data entry/scanning process. If the respondent reported the extreme value, the extreme value appears unchanged in the data.

2D. Open End or Other Specify Questions

Responses were reviewed for all open end and other specify questions. New additional codeframes were developed for the following questions and their associated variables:

HCA07M1_11 A7M1. TYPE HEALTH COVERAGE-1

HCA08_11 A8. PRIMARY HEALTH COVERAGE

The new codeframe for HCA07M1_11 and HCA08_11 is

8. Supplemental Insurance (not further specified)

HCA29M1_11 A29M1. TYPE MD ACCESS DIFFICULTY-1

The new codeframe for HCA29M1 is

5. No Insurance/Could not afford

HCE06M1_11 E6M1. TYPE VA SERVICES USED-1

The new codeframe for HCE06M1_11 is

8. Audiology/Hearing aids

HCE09M1_11 E9M1. REASON NO VA SERVICES-1

The new codeframe for HCE09M1_11 is

6. Don't qualify/Don't know if qualify/Denied services

HCE11M1_11 E11M1. TYPE NON VA CARE-1

The new codeframe for HCE09M1_11 is

8. All care

10. Dental

The following questions and associated variables contain both expansions and additions to the codeframes:

HCA38M1_11 A38M1. TYPE MEDICAL CARE DELAYED-1

Section: A Level: Respondent Type: Numeric Width: 8 Decimals: 0

What type(s) of care did you delay? Please mark all that apply.

-
4. Getting a check-up/Annual physical/Flu vaccine/Follow-up care
 5. Routine screening, like a colonoscopy/Lab tests/Other medical tests
 7. All Care
 8. Eye exam/eye surgery/eye glasses
 9. Dental

HCC04M1_11 C4M1. RELATIONSHIP NH RESIDENT-1

Section: C Level: Respondent Type: Numeric Width: 8 Decimals: 0

What was that person's relationship (s) to you? Please mark all that apply.

.....

2. Mother/ Mother-in-law
3. Father/ Father-in-law
4. Sibling/ Sibling-in-law
5. Close friend
6. Grandparent(s)/ Grandparent(s)-in-law

HCF01_11 F1. WHO ANSWERED SURVEY QUESTIONS

Section: F Level: Respondent Type: Numeric Width: 2 Decimals: 0

Were the questions in this questionnaire answered by the person to whom this questionnaire was addressed, or did someone else answer for that person? Please mark only one.

.....

1. Yes, the questions were answered by the person to whom the questionnaire was addressed
2. The questions were answered by that person's spouse or partner
3. The questions were answered by that person's son/son-in-law or daughter/ daughter-in-law
4. Other relative (sibs, grandkids, etc.)
5. Non-relative
97. The questions were answered by someone else: Please say if you are a relative, a friend, a care provider, or what
99. Answer not given

3. File Structure

The 2011 HRS HCMS Final Release (Version 2.0) data are at the respondent level. Respondent-level files contain questions that were asked of all respondents about themselves or their household (or were answered by a proxy for the respondent if the respondent was not able to fill out the questionnaire). The variable HCF01_11 (F1. WHO ANSWERED SURVEY QUESTIONS) provides information about who answered the questions in the 2011 HCMS. The data file contains one record for each respondent or proxy (n=7,649) who filled out and returned a 2011 Health Care Mail Survey.

The data file is called HCMS11_R, loosely translated as: Health Care Mail Survey 2011, with the “_R” designating the file is at the respondent level.

The primary Identification variables (IDs) are:

HHID HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFIER
PN PERSON NUMBER

Secondary Identification variables are:

MSUBHH 2010 SUB HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
MPN_SP 2010 SPOUSE/PARTNER PERSON NUMBER

Records in the data files are sorted in order by HHID and PN. The variable PN refers to the respondent to whom the questionnaire was mailed. The variable MPN_SP is the person number of the respondent's spouse/partner from the HRS 2010 core data. Identification variables in the HRS 2011 HCMS Final Release (Version 2.0) are stored in character format. For further information about HRS identification variables and merging data, see the Data Description for the HRS 2002 Core.

4. Distribution Files

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

- .DA for data files,
- .SAS for SAS program statements,
- .SPS for SPSS program statements,
- .DO for Stata DO statements,
- .DCT for Stata dictionary statements, and
- .TXT for codebook files.

For example,

HCMS11_R.DA contains ASCII data from Sections A, B, and C.
HCMS11_R.SAS contains corresponding SAS program statements,
HCMS11_R.SPS contains corresponding SPSS program statements,
HCMS11_R.DO contains corresponding Stata DO statements,
HCMS11_R.DCT contains corresponding Stata dictionary statements, and
HCMS11_R.TXT contains the ASCII codebook.

The 2011 HRS HCMS Final Release (Version 2.0) data are provided 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. In addition, you will probably want to download the codebook file (HCMS11_R.TXT) and the data description (this document).

5. Program Statements

5A. Using the Files with SAS

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:\hcms2011\sas" and the data file is located in "c:\hcms2011\data", you can run the file as is. A SAS system file (*.SD2 or *.SAS7BDAT) will be saved to directory "c:\hcms2011\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.

5B. Using the Files with SPSS

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:\hcms2011\spss" and the data file is located in "c:\hcms2011\DATA", you can run the file as is. An SPSS system file (*.SAV) will be saved to directory "c:\hcms2011\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.

5C. Using the Files with Stata

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:\hcms2011\stata" and the data file is located in "c:\hcms2011\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.

6. Linking Respondents across Time

Respondent records in the 2011 HCMS Final Release (Version 2.0) can be linked to respondent records from 2010 and prior waves by HHID and PN. The sub-household identifiers, ASUBHH for 1992, BSUBHH for 1993, CSUBHH for 1994, DSUBHH for 1995, ESUBHH for 1996, FSUBHH for 1998, GSUBHH for 2000, HSUBHH for 2002, JSUBHH for 2004, KSUBHH for 2006, LSUBHH for 2008 and MSUBHH for 2010 can be used to link household data with the cross-sectional respondent level data.

7. Changes From Version 1.0 to Version 2.0

After the release of the 2011 HCMS, it was discovered in subsequent core interviews that three respondents did not qualify for the study and have been dropped from all data (core releases, tracker, and ancillary studies). The lines that have been dropped are:

HHID 529766 PN 010

HHID 532056 PN 010

HHID 902054 PN 010

Also in the new release, we have included sample weights for participants of the 2011 HCMS (HCMSWGTR) and have added a version indicator (HCMSVERSION).

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 any data files.

By registering all users, we are able to document for our sponsors the size and diversity of our user community allowing us to continue to collect these important data.

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 the Health and Retirement Study's public release data. You must agree to

- o not attempt to identify respondents
- o not transfer data to third parties except as specified
- o not share your username and password
- o include specified citations in work based on HRS data
- o provide information to us about publications based on HRS data
- o report apparent errors in the HRS data or documentation files
- o notify us of changes in your contact information

For more information concerning privacy issues and conditions of use, please read

"Conditions of Use for Public Data Files" and "Privacy and Security Notice" at the Public File Download Area of the HRS Web site.

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, Room 3050
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 2011 HCMS Final Release (Version 2.0) data. 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: hqsquestions@umich.edu

Postal service:
Health and Retirement Study
The Institute for Social Research, Room 3050
The University of Michigan
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1248

FAX: (734) 647-1186