

## Prescription Drug Experiment in the HRS 2013 Internet Survey

Mick P. Couper  
Survey Research Center, University of Michigan  
January 12, 2016

### Introduction

This document and codebook describes the accompanying supplemental dataset for the prescription drug experiment conducted in the 2013 HRS Internet survey. Respondents in the survey were randomly assigned to three different conditions for soliciting prescription drug names:

- 1) a text box (TB), in which they typed the response
- 2) a drop box (DB) or select list, in which they scrolled to select the response
- 3) a JavaScript (JS) lookup table, in which they could type the first few letters of the response and then select from the reduced list of responses

Respondents were asked to provide the names of up to five prescription medications. They were also asked if they were taking drugs for selected medical conditions. The second and third conditions made use of a proprietary database of prescription medications provided by Lexi-comp (see <http://www.lexi.com/>). The responses were coded against the Lexi-data database.

Because provision of the drug names would present disclosure risks for HRS respondents, and because the Lexi-data database used for coding is proprietary (used with permission), the full set of responses and medication codes cannot be released publicly. However, to permit replication of the methodological experiment on the effectiveness of alternative input formats, the coded results from this study are released here as a supplemental dataset.

Details of the experiment are described in the following:

Couper, M.P., and Zhang, C. (2016), "Helping Respondents Provide Good Answers in Web Surveys." *Survey Research Methods*, forthcoming.

### Coding of Drug Names

The process of coding whether the drugs names provided matched to an entry in the database proceeded as follows:

- 1) For the DB and JS conditions, if a unique match was identified, code as an exact (machine) match. If not (or if "other, specify" selected) proceed to next step.
- 2) For TB condition (and residual cases from DB and JS conditions), if a unique match could be made to the database, code as an exact match.
- 3) If an exact match cannot be made, could a unique match be made after accounting for spelling errors, abbreviations, etc.)? If so, code as codable.
- 4) If a match cannot be made to the database, but a response was provided, code as uncodable. This included generic responses (e.g., birth control pills, heart medication) as well as explicit declinations (e.g., "do not wish to say," "none of your business," "can't remember).
- 5) If eligible for the question, but provided no response, code as missing.

This resulted in the following collapsed code frame:

1=Machine matchable (an exact match is found in the database)

2=Codable (a unique match could be found in the database after accounting for spelling errors, abbreviations or alternative names for drugs)

3=Uncodable (including explicit refusal and generic responses)

4=Missing (eligible for the question, but did not respond)

### Description of Supplemental Variables

The table contains the list of variables in the supplemental dataset. The variables HHID and PN are ID variables used to link to the HRS 2013 Internet survey data, and other waves of HRS.

Variable Name	Description
HHID	Household ID
PN	Person number
CMPT	Completion status (derived from DS_PCTCOMPLETE) 1=Complete 0=Partial
DEVICE_TYPE	Coded from user agent string 1=PC/laptop 2=Tablet 3=Smartphone
BROWSER_FULL	Coding of browser type, from user agent string 1=Chrome 2=Firefox 3=MSIE <=8 4=MSIE 9 5=MSIE 10+ 6=Safari 7=Other/mobile
BROWSER_SUB	Collapsed coding of browser type, from user agent string 1=Chrome 2=Firefox 3=MSIE 4=Safari 5 Other/mobile OS
DRUG_ESCAPE_ELIGIBLE	1=Eligible for escape question (based on data and drugs 2+ in DB and JS conditions) 0=Not eligible
DRUG_ESCAPE	Response to escape question about difficulty (original variable is F021_DIFFJAVA) 1=Yes, routed to TB for remaining items 5=No, continue with DB or JS conditions . =Not eligible for escape
DRUG_EXPT	Experimental assignment (original variable is F_P_RANDOMINPUT) 1=Text box 2=Drop box 3=JavaScript
<b>The remaining variables are repeated for up to 5 drugs</b>	

DRUG1_ELIG-DRUG5_ELIG	Eligible for drug question # (i.e., taking at least # prescription drug) 1=yes 0=no
DRUG1_MISS-DRUG5_MISS	Missing values for drug # 1=Eligible but missing 0=Eligible and not missing .=Not eligible
DRUG1_MATCH- DRUG5_MATCH	Result of coding operation (see above) for drug # 1=Matchable 2=Codable 3=Uncodable 4=Missing .=Ineligible
DRUG1_TOTAL_RT- DRUG5_TOTAL_RT	Response time for drug # (outliers trimmed at 300 seconds – about the 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile)