



Update on the National Survey of Family Growth

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NSFG Goals

SURVEY CONTENT HISTORICALLY DESIGNED (since 1973) TO:

- Provide a nationally representative snapshot of U.S. women ages 15-44
- Address Section 306 of the Public Health Service Act, stipulating “NCHS shall collect statistics on... family formation, growth, and dissolution”
- Help explain variations in U.S. birth rates using intermediate or “proximate” determinants of fertility
- Assess factors that affect timing and outcomes of sexual activity and pregnancy

OVER THE YEARS, CONTENT EVOLVED TO ALSO:

- Describe relationships and families
- Collect data from men
- Expand age range to 15-49 for men and women
- Measure receipt of family planning and other medical services
- Monitor risk of HIV and STIs in general household population

NSFG Background (1973-present)

- One eligible person selected for main survey based on household screener
- Key changes since “Cycle 1” in 1973, conducted with ever-married women:
 - 1982 – Inclusion of never-married women
 - 1995 – Conversion from paper survey to computer-assisted interviewing; 1st use of incentives
 - 2002 – Inclusion of men & expansion of content in Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (ACASI)
 - 2006 – Transition from periodic to continuous fieldwork design
 - 2015 – Expansion of age range from 15-44 to 15-49
- Public-use files have been released with every periodic survey 1973-2002 (Cycles 1-6) and roughly every 2 years 2006-2019 (under continuous fieldwork design).
- After awarding a new contract to RTI in September 2020, data collection resumed in January 2022 with a multi-mode design and planned for 8 years (2022-2029).
 - Goal of achieving at least 5000 cases per year
 - Expected to release four 2-year data files with 2022-2023 public-use files released at end of 2024

NSFG Team

At NCHS:

NSFG Team now (since Oct 2023) within Division Health Interview Statistics, Survey Planning and Special Surveys Branch:

Anjani Chandra, Team Lead/Principal Investigator

Joyce Abma, Contract Officer's Representative

Gladys Martinez

Kim Daniels

Colleen Nugent

Jennifer Sayers

Hee-Choon Shin, Mathematical Statistician, Division of Research & Methodology

At RTI:

Andy Peytchev, Principal Investigator

Becky Granger, Project Director

Carlos Macuada, Instrumentation and Methodology Reports Task Leader

Taylor Lewis, Sample Design, Weighting, and Imputation Task Leader, Preparation of Preliminary Data File Deliveries

Mai Nguyen, Systems Development, Data Processing, Documentation and Delivery Task Leader

Craig Hollingsworth, Information Security and Confidentiality Task Leader

Milton Cahoon, Preparation for Data Collection and Data Collection Task Leader

Since NSFG's last update for BSC in Feb 2022:

- Concluded the 1st 2 years of data collection (2022-2023) using a multi-mode quarterly design:
 - Phase 1 (weeks 1-4) – **web only** (\$2 screener incentive; \$40 main survey incentive)
 - Phase 2 (weeks 5-12) – **web & FTF** (same incentives as Phase 1)
 - Phase 3 (weeks 13-16) – **web & FTF** (up to 50% subsample of nonrespondents) (\$5 screener; additional \$40 for main)
- Celebrated the 50th Anniversary of NSFG (1973-2023):
 - [Understanding Fertility and Families for 50 Years | Blogs | CDC](#)
- Secured OMB clearance through 9/30/26, along with ERB approvals
- Published (or soon to publish) several reports based on our most recently available data for 2015-2019:
 - [Fertility of Men and Women Aged 15-49 in the U.S.](#) (NHSR #179, Jan 2023)
 - [Contraceptive Methods Women Have Ever Used](#) (NHSR #195, Dec 2023)
 - [Teenagers in the U.S.: Sexual Activity, Contraceptive Use, and Childbearing](#) (NHSR #196, Dec 2023)
 - *Infertility and Impaired Fecundity in Women and Men (NHSR #202, Apr 2024)*

2022-2023 NSFG: Summary

- Fell somewhat short of the 2-year target of 10,000 cases; ended with 9,957 cases
 - 5,586 females and 4,371 males (56% female)
 - 74% web; 26% face-to-face (FTF)
 - Oversampling of teens and Blacks fell short of targets
 - Response rates lower than hoped, but to be expected with greater share of web surveys
- Unable to begin fieldwork 100% FTF and then conduct the planned Year 1 mode experiment (FTF-only vs multimode) due to COVID-related staffing challenges for field interviewers
 - Held 12 virtual trainings in 2022-23 instead of expected 4-6 in-person trainings due to pandemic, hiring & attrition issues
 - If mode experiment were still to be pursued in a later year, would need significantly more FIs than for multimode design and considerably more funding
- Conducted an incentive experiment to use higher incentives in Phases 1 & 2 of the quarter, which showed promising results:
 - Improved main survey completion rates (mostly web) for Hispanic & Black respondents, as well as teens
 - Reduced over-representation of college-educated respondents in the sample
 - Some indication of key estimates being different under the higher incentive condition
 - Obtained approval to increase P1/2 incentive from \$40 to \$60, starting in Year 3 (2024)

2022-2023 NSFG: Other Key Survey Changes

- Streamlining and restructuring of content to reduce complexity and respondent burden
- Accelerating launch of multimode design (including web) to start in Year 1 (Jan 2022), rather than original plan for Year 3 or 4 meant earlier adaptation of survey instruments and interview aids to work for both FTF and web modes, in English and Spanish, including:
 - Developing web screener to manage multiple survey tasks formerly handled by interviewers, such as informed consent/assent
 - Developing an electronic life history calendar for female survey
- Improvements to accommodate respondents in same-sex marriages and cohabitations
- Incorporation or revision of items requested by cosponsors or prompted by CCQDER work, such as:
 - Adverse (and Positive) Childhood Events, including 2 items related to discrimination added to CASI section
 - 6-item Washington Group Short Set on Functioning used instead of 6-item ACS disability series
 - Menstrual problem series added for females

Survey Changes for 2024-2025 NSFG (Years 3-4)

- Incentive for Phases 1 & 2 of each quarter is now \$60, rather than \$40 (*based on results of incentive experiment conducted in Years 1-2*)
 - Phase 1 (weeks 1-4) – **web only** (\$2 screener incentive; **\$60** main survey incentive)
 - Phase 2 (weeks 5-12) – **web & FTF** (same incentives as Phase 1)
 - Phase 3 (weeks 13-16) – **web & FTF** (up to 50% subsample of nonrespondents) (\$5 screener; additional \$40 for main)
- Made a small number of instrument revisions and corrections for Year 3 based on cosponsor feedback and evaluation of data from Years 1 & 2, as well as screener improvements to enhance participation.
- Incorporated use of a respondent-selected PIN, used in conjunction with the passcode provided in survey invitation letter, to enhance privacy and security of survey responses.
- Along with other enhancements in Years 1 and 2 to survey invitation letters and advance materials to combat low response rates, we are evaluating broader use of a QR code to encourage/facilitate participation in the main survey, based on success had with QR code use for the screener.

NSFG Team's Primary Activities in 2024

- **Preparing the 2022-2023 NSFG public-use files (PUF) for release by year's end:**
 - **Extensive work** to evaluate all data including recodes, finalize variables acceptable for public use, determine variables to make available as restricted-use data in RDC, and prepare all associated PUF documentation
 - Considering alternative strategies to bolster protections against internal intruders, to complement protections against external intruder risk
 - Disclosure Review Board (DRB) review date is set for Sept 19, 2024
- Evaluating Year 3 (2024) data as they come in to:
 - Assess Year 3 instrument changes
 - Monitor production goals/metrics and modify survey materials and procedures as needed
 - Examine recodes and other variables in preparation for the 2024-2025 file release
- Beginning consultations with cosponsors to determine survey content changes for Year 5 (2026) so that appropriate OMB and ERB approvals can be obtained in 2025
- Securing adequate funding to support ongoing data collection and related contract activities

Thank you!

Questions and Discussion?