

HEALTH AND RETIREMENT STUDY

Restricted Data

2015 Life History Mail Survey (LHMS) Historically Black College and University Data

Data Description

Version 1, August 2024

To the Restricted Data Investigator: This restricted data set is intended for exclusive use by you and the persons specified in the Agreement for Use of Restricted Data from the Health and Retirement Study and/or the Supplemental Agreement with Research Staff for Use of Restricted Data from the Health and Retirement Study. If there are any questions about this data set and its use, refer to the restricted data pages on the HRS Web site (<https://hrs.isr.umich.edu/data-products/restricted-data>). You can also contact the HRS RDA Help Desk via electronic mail (<mailto:hrsdaapplication@umich.edu>).

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1. Introduction

The Life History Mail Survey 2015 (LHMS 2015) contains questions about residential, education, employment and health history, and other important childhood and family events.

The LHMS is part of 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 (NIA) provided funding (U01 AG009740) for the 2015 LHMS, which 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 Registration and Downloading the Data (at the end of this document) for additional details.

The questions in the LHMS are based on several similar studies around the world, including: the English Longitudinal Study of Aging (ELSA, England), the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARELIFE), and the China Health and Retirement Longitudinal Study (CHARLS).

2. 2015 LHMS Sample Design

In December 2015, questionnaires were mailed to a subsample of HRS respondents (n= 11,256). The sample for the 2015 LHMS consists of all living HRS respondents who were not included in the 2015 Consumption and Activities Mail Survey (CAMS) and who completed their most recent HRS core interview in English (rather than Spanish). The field period for the 2015 LHMS was December 2015 through summer 2016.

The data file for the LHMS contains 332 variables, and data for 6,481 respondents. The sample response rate for the LHMS is 58% percent.

3. About the 2015 LHMS Historically Black College and University Data

3a. Variable Names and Labels

Variable names begin with the letters LH to designate the Life History Mail Survey, followed by _15 to indicate the wave in which the data were collected. The variables available in the data file are listed in the table below.

Variable Name	Description
HHID	HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
PN	RESPONDENT PERSON IDENTIFICATION NUMBER
LH23_ORDER_15	ROW NUMBER OF DATA ENTERED BY R
LH23_A_15	POST-HIGH SCHOOL START YEAR
LH23_B_15	POST-HIGH SCHOOL END YEAR
IF_HBCU_LHMS15	IF INSTITUTION ATTENDED IS A HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY
VERSION	VERSION NUMBER

To create the variable IF_HBCU_LHMS15, the name of the institution attended and the state in which it was located was compared to the list of Historically Black Colleges and Universities located at <https://www.thehundred-seven.org/hbculist.html>. If the school and state reported matched one of those appearing on that list, we coded IF_HBCU_LHMS15 as "1", and if it did not match we coded IF_HBCU_LHMS15 as "0". Records where a code of "0" or "1" could not be determined due to missing data originating from the respondent are coded as missing (IF_HBCU_LHMS15= ".").

Unlike LHMS 2015 public data, these restricted records are stacked. Use the values in the variable LH22_ORDER_15 to determine which row of Question 23 (see example below) the respondent recorded values.

Q23 Please list the names of all of the **COLLEGES/COMMUNITY COLLEGES and PROFESSIONAL OR TECHNICAL SCHOOLS** or **PROGRAMS** that you attended after High School.

If the school(s) you attended were outside the U.S, please write the country name instead of the state.

#	Start Year	End Year	Name of College, School, or Program	City / Town	State
1	1943	1947			
2	1948	1949			
3	1955	1957			
4					
5					
6					
7					

3b. Data Quality

Due to the skip patterns in this questionnaire, all missing answers originating from the respondent are treated the same in the dataset and coded as simply "Answer not given/Missing." This is true whether the respondent was "expected" to answer the question or not, based on earlier responses.

While cleaning the data, when extreme, unlikely or conflicting values were encountered, electronic images of the questionnaires were checked directly to determine if errors were introduced during the data entry/scanning process. This includes instances where a start year is greater than an end year. If the respondent reported the extreme or conflicting value, the value appears unchanged in the data.

For the variables included in this restricted subset of LHMS data for the LH23 series of questions, respondents were instructed to write the start year, end year, the name of the College/School/Program, the city where it was located, the state where it was located, whether it was a public/state or private/religious institution, the major fields of study and which degree(s) or certificates were earned, if any. College/School/Program names are not included in the full public, full restricted, or in this subset of restricted data.

4. File Structure

The HRS 2015 LHMS Historically Black College and University Data (Version 1) data are at the respondent level. Respondent-level files contain questions that were asked of all respondents about themselves (or were answered by a proxy for the respondent if the respondent was not able to fill out the questionnaire). This data file contains 7554 records (one or more records per respondent) for those reporting any post-high school schooling in the 2015 LHMS questionnaire.

The data file is called LHMS2015_HBCU, translated as: 2015 Life History Mail Survey Historically Black College and University Data.

The primary Identification variables (IDs) are:

HHID HOUSEHOLD IDENTIFIER
PN PERSON NUMBER

Records in the data files are sorted in order by the identifying variables from the HRS core study, HHID (household ID) and PN (person number). The variable PN refers to the respondent to whom the questionnaire was mailed. Identification variables in the file are stored in character format. For further information about HRS identification variables and merging data, see the [Data Description for the HRS 2002 Core](#).

5. Distribution Files

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,

LHMS2015_HBCU.DA contains ASCII data
LHMS2015_HBCU.SAS contains corresponding SAS program statements,
LHMS2015_HBCU.SAS7BDAT contains SAS data in “ready-to-use” format,
LHMS2015_HBCU.SPS contains corresponding SPSS program statements,
LHMS2015_HBCU.SAV contains SPSS data in “ready-to-use” format,
LHMS2015_HBCU.DO contains corresponding Stata DO statements,
LHMS2015_HBCU.DTA contains Stata data in “ready-to-use” format,
LHMS2015_HBCU.DCT contains corresponding Stata dictionary statements, and
LHMS2015_HBCU.TXT contains the ASCII codebook

The HRS 2015 Life History Mail Survey Historically Black College and University Data (Version 1) 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 (LHMS2015_HBCU.TXT) and the data description (this document).

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:\lhms2015\sas" and the data file is located in "c:\lhms2015\data", you can run the file as is. A SAS system file (*.SD2 or *.SAS7BDAT) will be saved to directory "c:\lhms2015\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:\lhms2015\spss" and the data file is located in "c:\lhms2015\data", you can run the file as is. An SPSS system file (*.SAV) will be saved to directory "c:\lhms2015\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:\lhms2015\stata" and the data file is located in "c:\lhms2015\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 2015 LHMS Educational History (Version 1) can be linked to respondent records from 2014 and prior waves by HHID and PN. The core sub-household identifiers can be used to link household data with the cross-sectional respondent level data.

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

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 2015 LHMS Historically Black College and University data (Version 1). 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

Mail:
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