

National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience

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History & Background

- National Longitudinal Surveys were started in the 1960's to track the labor force over the life cycle. At that time, most surveys were cross-sectional. Longitudinal work started in earnest earlier in UK.
- Data collection done by Census Bureau; CHRR did design, analysis and data distribution.
- Originally had 4 cohorts – Men 45-59, women 30-44, young men and women 14-24. These started in late 1960's. Some ended in 1980's others in early 2000's.
- Cohorts of youth added in 1979 (born 1957-64) and 1997 (born 1980-1984)
- I won't talk about the NLSY97 for lack of time but much of the design for the NLSY79 is used for NLSY97, except there is no child study.

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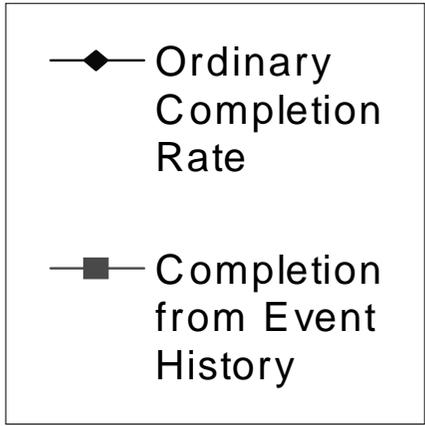
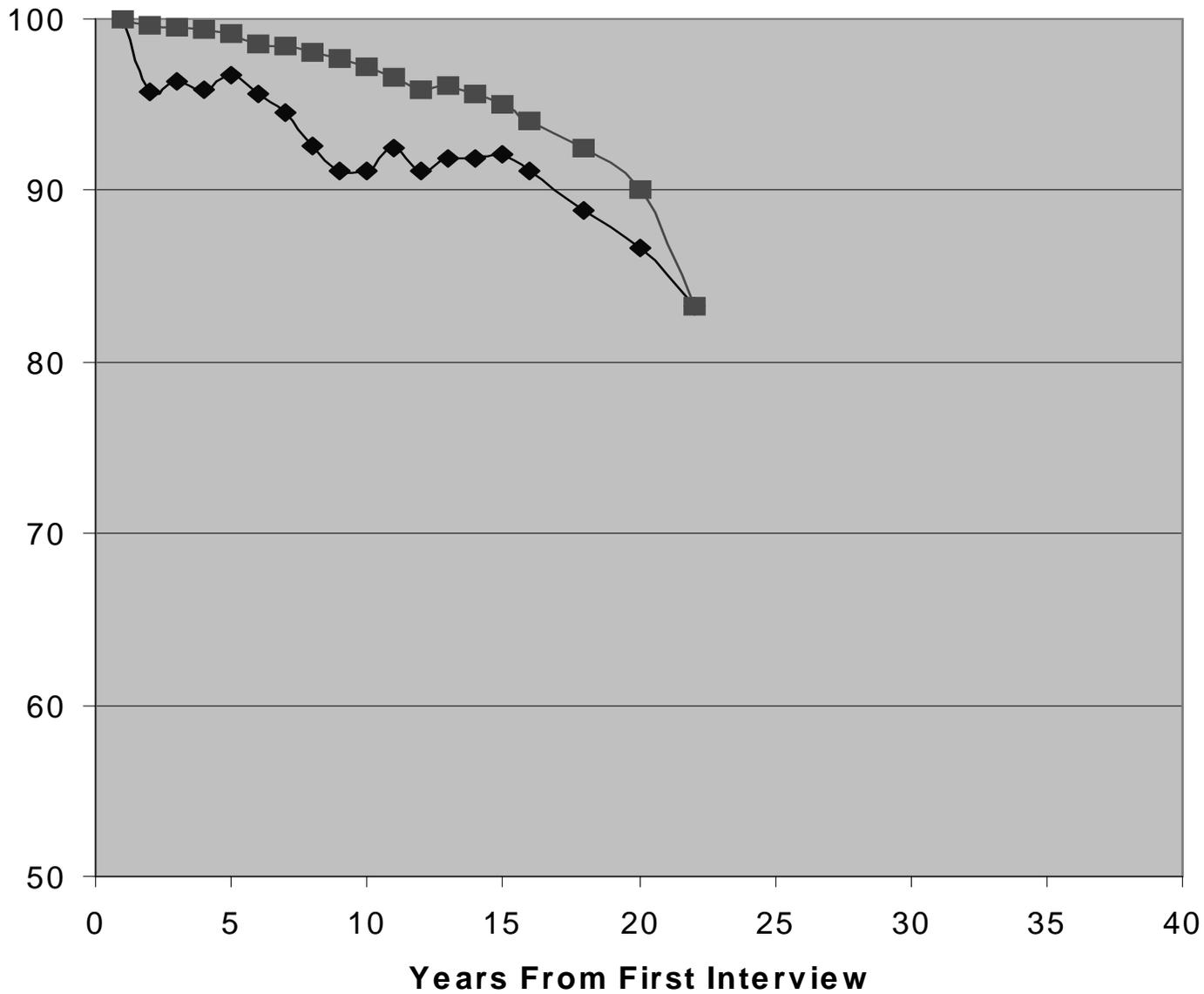
NLSY79 - Sample

- Nationally representative with oversamples of Blacks & Hispanics + originally Low Income non-Black, non-Hispanics (poor whites – used to determine effect of being Black vs being poor) and military members
- N=12,686 in 1979; dropped military oversample & “poor whites” – currently about 8200 completes + similar number in Children of the NLSY
- All persons born 1957-64 selected – many siblings and expected number of identical and fraternal twins
- Over 120,000 variables; data perusal & extraction over the Web – integrates with SAS, SPSS & Stata.
- Event histories on education, employment, marriage, fertility and training.
- Event histories use “bounded interviewing”.

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Effect of Returning to Respondents



Children of NLSY

- Starting in 1986 children of female respondents were assessed for social, emotional and cognitive development
- Assessed from 4 – 14 in even numbered years. Peabody Individual Achievement Tests, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Home environment scale, “What-I-Am-Like” to measure personality structure.
- As children get older we ask them about smoking, drugs, alcohol, sex, schooling, peers, relations with parents.
- At 15 they get interviews like those their mother received starting in 1979.
- We continue to follow the children; there are very few children being born.
- When children turn 30 we reduce interview frequency – their lives become less complex.

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Impact & Significance

- Over 6,000 citations to project data in our on-line bibliography
- Single most complete and detailed data source on employment, education and earnings in the world.
- Unique data source on cognition and cognitive ability over the life course and across generations.
- Child Study has resulted in re-orientation of how child development is studied; much of what we know about child development is based on Child Study.
- Similar efforts around the world

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Periodicity

- Main respondents interviewed yearly 1979 – 1994, then 1996, 1998, etc. to present
- Children assessed in 1986, 1988, 1990, etc. to present
- Content a mixture of repeating modules and one-time modules, such as ASVAB norming in 1980, school survey for children in 1995.
- Some modules are asked at particular ages, for example, we ask questions that test short-term memory at 49 and 59 and ask a long sequence of questions about self-reported health conditions at ages 40, 50, 60 etc.

Scope (selected measures other than health)

- Education (event history)
- Training (event history)
- Household composition
- Military service
- Marriage (event history)
- Fertility (event history)
- Income
- Employment (event history)
- Earnings
- Assets, Liabilities, Net Worth, creditworthiness
- Intelligence (AFQT) in 1980
- Detailed geocoding
- Drug & alcohol Use
- Criminal behavior (some)
- Psychometrics
 - Depression (3 times)
 - Pearlin Mastery
 - Rotter Locus of control
 - Risk & Time Preference
 - Rosenberg Self-Esteem (3)
- Volunteerism
- Religion & religiosity

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Health Areas-Main Respondents

- Cognition at 49 (and 59?)
- Health Insurance coverage & source
- Smoking
- Drugs for cholesterol & Estrogen
- Contraception
- Exercise
- Height & weight (high frequency)
- Handedness
- Pre & Post-natal maternal care
- Accidents and Injuries on job
- Does health affect potential activities
- Repeated health self-assessment
- Standard Form 12 & health conditions at age 40 & 50
- Parental Health

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Health – Children of NLSY

All linked to family structure, maternal background & location

- Gestational age
- Birth weight & length (maternal report)
- Drug & alcohol use during pregnancy
- Maternal weight gain during pregnancy
- Amniocentesis and pregnancy problems
- Problems at birth
- Perinatal care
- Smoking & drugs
- Breastfeeding, weaning, solid food & age
- Vaccinations
- Height & weight each interview
- Accidents & Injuries
- Health affect schooling & activity
- Well & sick care early in life

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Young Adult Survey

- When children turn 15, they are given a more conventional survey – it does not test the children but asks a wide variety of questions about education, social life and employment (in less detail)
- Young adults interviewed in even numbered years until they turn 30 and then interviewed every 4 years
- Data linked to Child Study – we have about 59,000 variables for Child/Young Adult (plus 120,000 variables for their mothers).
- Full data on all siblings as all children of the mother were assessed.

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New Efforts

- Collecting saliva samples for Young Adult survey to recover DNA and RNA (starting in 2012). DNA sequencing must wait for funding.
- We have recovered original tests from 1980 Armed Forces Vocational Aptitude Battery and want to construct a shorter test based on Item Response Theory using Computer Adaptive Testing to study how cognition has changed over 35 years in response to life events.
- Working to recover more data on entrepreneurship
- Looking to collect more data on personality, psychometrics and family health history
- DNA and RNA, mental health psychometrics,

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Advantages and Disadvantages

Disadvantages

- The data sets are very large; 120k+ variables for main cohort, about 60k for children. Questionnaires have complex skip pattern and many variables that look like they contain the same information.
- Not all persons interviewed in all years
- Weak Biomarkers

Advantages

- Exploit the large family groups due to original selection of all in-scope siblings and all children of female respondents.
 - Brothers, sisters, mothers, children, aunts, uncles, nephews, nieces

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Advantages (cont.)

- Very high sample retention rate among long-running panels
- High frequency of interviews
- Many subject matter areas covered
- Strong documentation for those with the patience to read it
- Large literature of papers using the data
- Public use data available over the Web in a form that is easy to use.

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