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NHANES 2015-2016 Overview

Introduction

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Division of Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (DHANES), part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has conducted series of health and nutrition surveys since the early 1960's. The National Health and Nutrition Examination Surveys (NHANES) were conducted on a periodic basis from 1971 to 1994. In 1999, NHANES became continuous. Every year, approximately 5,000 individuals of all ages are interviewed in their homes and complete the health examination component of the survey. The health examination is conducted in a mobile examination center (MEC); the MEC provides an ideal setting for the collection of high quality data in a standardized environment.

Details of the design and content of NHANES and the public use data files are available on the [NHANES website](#).

Target Population

The NHANES target population is the noninstitutionalized civilian resident population of the United States. Over the years the NHANES design has changed periodically to sample larger numbers of certain subgroups of particular public health interest, thus to increase the reliability and precision of estimates of health status indicators for these population subgroups. In 2011, a primary sample design change was implemented in NHANES to oversample non-Hispanic Asians, in addition to the ongoing oversample of Hispanics, non-Hispanic blacks, older adults, and low income whites/others. Since the total sample size in any year is fixed due to operational constraints, sample sizes for Hispanic persons and non-low income white and other persons were decreased in order to increase the sample sizes for Asians. Consequently, sample size for Mexican-American persons was also decreased compared to survey cycles prior to 2011. The oversampled subgroups in the 2015-2016 survey cycle were as follows:

- Hispanic persons;
- Non-Hispanic black persons;

- Non-Hispanic Asian persons;
- Non-Hispanic white and other† persons at or below 185 percent‡ of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines; and
- Non-Hispanic white and other† persons aged 80 years and older.

† Other: Non-Hispanic persons reported races other than black, Asian, or white.

‡ The cut-point for low-income oversampling was changed from $\leq 130\%$ to $\leq 185\%$ of the HHS poverty guidelines in 2015