National Child Development Study (NCDS) 2004 – 2005 Survey

Questionnaire documentation

Introduction

The 2004 - 2005 survey of the National Child Development Study (NCDS) was carried out using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI). The survey instrument is a computer program written in a software package called Blaise. This document is a paper representation of this computer program.

Structure of the questionnaire
The CATI questionnaire for the NCDS 2004 - 2005 Survey is divided into modules (blocks) of questions according to topic. In this document the heading of each module gives the module title. Interviews were conducted with the Cohort Member - there were no proxy interviews.

Each module contains a list of all the questions and answer options that are included in that module and the routing conditions or "rules" which govern when a particular question should be asked. In some cases the text of a particular question may be varied automatically to take account of the particular circumstances of the respondent using a "textfill". These possible different wordings are defined along with the circumstances in which they are used.

Most modules also contain edit checks, which highlight to the interviewer any inconsistent or unusual answers so that they can resolve / check them with the respondent. These are referenced in the main part of the documentation and defined in detail at the end of the relevant part of the documentation.

Examples aiming to facilitate the reading and understanding of the documentation follow.

Examples: Main part of documentation

Question (Variable) Name

Question text (including any interviewer notes in capital letters of smaller size)

NUMROOMS

How many rooms are there in your home, not counting kitchens, bathrooms, toilets, halls, garages and utility rooms but including kitchen-diner?
Range: 1..50

Answer options – indicates that the interviewer should enter a number in the range 1..50

CHECK NCDS26

Indicates the CATI program checked that the answer to the question was within a specified range (e.g. for height, weight, etc) or consistent with a previous answer. Checks are defined at the end of the documentation

Precedes questions put to a defined subgroup of respondents – described firstly in words then by the logical condition

IF (interviewed in 1999 / 2000 = yes) AND (whether spouse / partner in household = yes)
[(DLastInt = 1) AND (DMSpPart = 1)]
|
| **PartChk**
| Can I check, were you living with [^partner's name] at the time of the last survey in [^date of last
| interview]?
| 1 Yes
| 2 No
|
END OF FILTER

Indicates the end of questions put to a defined subgroup

EXPARTE
INTERVIEWER: ASK OR CODE
(Can I just check...) was this person male or female?
 1 Male
 2 Female
[Responses to EXPARTE are recorded in variables EXPARTE to EXPARTE9 and EXPART14,
EXPART26,…, EXPART74]

Pre-defined answer categories

Indicates names of variables where the information is recorded. This appears for variables that are asked in loops.

IF whether something wrong with child at birth = yes [Pregh = 1]
|
| **PREGI**
| What was the problem?
| Open
| *[Responses to PREGI are coded using ICD-10 coding and recorded in variables XPREGA to*
| *XPREGE, XPREGA2 to XPREGE2, …, XPREGA64 to XPREGE64]*
|
END OF FILTER

Answer category – indicates that interviewer should type in the cohort member's verbatim answer

Examples: Main part of documentation

PREGB

Can you tell me the name of this child?

STRING 30 ◄————

[Responses to PREGB are recorded in variables PREGB to PREGB8 (for the latest pregnancy).
All responses are recorded in variables PREGB to PREGB64]

> Answer category – indicates that interviewer should type in the Cohort Member's verbatim answer (up to 30 characters)

WUSEOTH

You said you use your computer at work for other uses. Can you tell me what these uses are?

INTERVIEWER: PROBE - 'What else?'

Open

[Responses to WUSEOTH are backcoded to variables XWUSEO01 to XWUSEO16]

> Indicates names of variables where the information was backcoded during coding and editing.

LSICond

What (^else / BLANK) is the matter with you?

INTERVIEWER: PROBE FOR NAME OF CONDITION AND SYMPTOMS AND/OR EFFECTS. TRY TO GET THE OFFICIAL MEDICAL NAMES AND DETAILS OF THE SYMPTOMS AND EFFECTS.

Open

[Responses to LSICond are coded using ICD-10 coding and recorded in variables XLSICA to XLSICE,
XLSICA2 to XLSICE2, …, XLSICA10 to XLSICE10]

> Indicates names of variables where the information was stored after being coded.

Example: Checks

IF number of rooms = RESPONSE [NUMROOMS = RESPONSE]

|

| **CHECK NCDS26**

| *CHECK: number of rooms >= 20 [NUMROOMS >= 20]*

| |

| | The number of rooms seems rather high. Please confirm with respondent.

| |

| *END CHECK* ◄————

|

END OF FILTER

> Definition of the edit check, referred to in the main part of the documentation

Questions and Answers
In CATI, rather than being numbered, questions are given a unique name, which is usually derived from the content of the question. Questions are identified by their bold formatting and the different font type. The text of the question that should be read out by the interviewer is displayed in lower case, with the end of the question usually indicated by a question mark. This may involve the interviewer reading through a list of pre-defined answers. At most questions, the respondent chooses his / her answer(s) from a pre-defined list which is read out by the interviewer. At other times the respondent is not offered a pre-defined choice of answer categories, instead the interviewer codes their spontaneous response to a pre-defined list of answers. Alternatively the interviewer may be asked to type in the answer verbatim. At "STRING" questions, the number of characters allowed is limited (although interviewers can, where necessary, enter more characters in an electronic memo). At "OPEN" questions, there is no limit on the number of characters. Interviewers may also be asked to enter answers in the form of a date, time or number. Notes to help or instruct the interviewer are shown in upper case and smaller size letters.

Questions at which a pre-defined list of answers are given can be split into two types: single-coded and multi-coded. Single-coded questions allow only one answer category to be chosen; unless otherwise stated, the question is single-coded. Multi-coded questions are usually identified by a note to the interviewer to "CODE ALL THAT APPLY" and allow more than one answer to be recorded. At some multi-coded questions, one of the answers may be an "exclusive code". This means that if this answer is chosen, no others may be chosen at the same time; if this happens, CATI activates a check. Unless otherwise stated, all questions also allow "Don't Know" and "Refusal" answers to be entered. Where these are not allowed, it is stated below the answers.

Routing instructions
Routing instructions are fully detailed in italics at appropriate points. The routing condition is both explained in words and given in terms of the logical command. The expressions "<" , "=", ">" are used to denote "less than", "equal to" and "more than" respectively. The term "<>" means "not equal to". The routing condition is displayed immediately before the first question to which it applies and is indicated by an "IF" statement. The end of the influence of a particular routing condition is indicated by an "END OF FILTER" instruction. Where a question is asked more than once (in loops), this is indicated at the beginning and the end of the loop, with the words "LOOP FOR…" and "END OF LOOP".

Textfills
Textfills are used to tailor the question wording to the respondent's circumstances. For example, by referring to name of the cohort member or other persons in the household or using an answer they have given earlier. Textfills are preceded by "[^" and followed by "]". When more than one possible textfill appears within a question, they are separated by "/".

There are some standard textfills that are used repeatedly throughout the questionnaire.

- [^Cohort Member's name], [^Person's name], [^Partner's name], [^Child's name] refers to the exact name of a person (as previously recorded).
- [^Date of last interview] / January 2000] would refer to the actual date of the last interview if the cohort member was interviewed in 1999/2000. Otherwise the date would refer to "January 2000".
- [^we last saw you in [^Date of last interview] / March 1991] would refer to the actual date of the last interview if the cohort member was interviewed in 1999/2000 or "March 1991", if the cohort member was not interviewed in 1999/2000.
- [^male / female], [^father / mother], [^he / she], [^his / her] refer to gender and should be read accordingly

Other textfills are used at particular questions or modules. In some cases, the most common value of the textfill may be blank i.e. words are inserted into a question only in particular circumstances. In these cases the word "BLANK" is used to indicate that no words may appear on the screen.

Checks
An advantage of CATI questionnaires is that checks can be included in the program to alert interviewers when an unlikely or impossible response has been entered.

- Hard checks can be used to prevent logical inconsistency (for example so that a child cannot be older than his / her parents). In such circumstances, a warning screen is activated to alert the interviewer to the problem. The interviewer cannot bypass hard checks - they must identify the problem and resolve the discrepancy before proceeding.
- Soft checks are used to bring improbabilities to the attention of the interviewer. For example, if the birth weight of a baby is higher or lower than expected. In such situations the interviewer is instructed to investigate the improbable answer and make any necessary corrections. If the interviewer is confident that the information given is correct, they may suppress the warning and continue with the interview.

Checks are referenced at the question at which they occur and specified in detail at the end of the questionnaire documentation.

Using this questionnaire with the data
The data collection for the NCDS 2004-2005 Survey was carried out using the Blaise CATI questionnaire. Additional coding and editing were conducted on the data post-fieldwork.

As explained above, at some questions respondents were given the opportunity to choose an "other" answer and have this answer entered as a STRING or OPEN text by the interviewer. Most of these text answers have been coded and this is indicated accordingly in the documentation. The new codes given to the "other" answers are stored in new variables, whose names always begin with an "X". In this document, the names of these variables are shown in bold italics at the end of the relevant question. New variables were derived using the old and new codes; the names of these variables always begin with a "Z". The STRING variables were included in the SPSS datasets, whereas the OPEN variables were provided as Excel spreadsheets.

After coding and editing, the Blaise data was transferred into SPSS. Generally the SPSS variable name is the same as the CATI question name listed in this document. For some questions (mainly for questions in loops), the name of the variable(s) where the information is stored is indicated clearly underneath each question. For multi-coded questions, variables are generally suffixed with a number from "1" or "01" through to the maximum number of responses for that question. The maximum number of codes for most multi-coded questions was extended at the edit stage, in order to allow for all "other" answers that the respondents gave. For this reason, at multi-coded questions the number of variables in the data is usually greater than the number of codes originally allowed in the CATI. Answers are stored in these variables according to their order of mention.

Further details of the coding and editing can be found in the accompanying CodeBook.