

Appendix I. National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW)

The National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being (NSCAW) is the only national, longitudinal study of families who were subjects of child abuse or neglect investigations or assessments conducted by U.S. Child Protective Services (CPS) agencies. NSCAW was funded by the Administration for Children and Families within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, with field data collection carried out by Research Triangle Institute (RTI) International (1). A two-stage, stratified sample design was utilized. In the first stage, the United States was divided into nine sampling strata. Eight of these strata corresponded to the eight states with the largest child welfare caseloads, and the ninth consisted of the remaining states and the District of Columbia. States requiring CPS agency first contact, i.e., that first contact of potential study participants be made by CPS agency staff rather than NSCAW field representatives, were excluded from the sampling frame. Primary sampling units (PSUs) were then formed and selected from these nine strata with a probability proportional to the size of the county child welfare population. Each PSU was defined as the geographic area served by a single CPS agency.

With the first NSCAW cohort (NSCAW I), a total of 92 PSUs were selected. Within these PSUs, children ranging in age from birth to 14 years were sampled from all CPS investigations or assessments opened during a 15-month period beginning October 1, 1999. The final child welfare sample included 5,501 children with an overall response rate of 64%. Extensive analyses conducted by RTI International established that non-response bias was minimal and unlikely to be consequential for most analyses (1). However, survey weights were developed to adjust for imperfections in sampling as well as survey non-response and frame non-coverage.

With the second NSCAW cohort (NSCAW II), the same PSUs were included whenever

possible, resulting in a total of 81 PSUs in 83 counties nationwide. Within these PSUs, a total of 5,873 children ranging in age from birth to 17.5 years of age were sampled from all child welfare investigations or assessments completed between February 2008 and April 2009. The overall response rate at baseline (wave one) was 55.8%. The difference in response rate across cohorts was attributed to various factors, including the 9-year interval between studies, higher rates of non-response observed for surveys over time, increased state and county restrictions dictating access to sampled respondents, and the addition of new “case expiration” criteria to tighten the length of time between close of investigation and interview completion among respondents in the NSCAW II cohort (2). As with NSCAW I, survey weights were developed to account for the complex survey design of the data and adjust for survey non-response and frame non-coverage.

Further details regarding NSCAW I and II procedures are available elsewhere (2, 3).

REFERENCES

1. Dowd K, Kinsey S, Wheelless S, Thissen R, Richardson J, Suresh R, et al. National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-being (NSCAW) Combined waves 1-4. Data file users manual restricted release version. Ithaca, New York: National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect.; 2006.
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3. Dowd K, Dolan M, Wallin J, Miller K, Biemer P, Aragon-Logan E, et al. National Survey of Child and Adolescent Well-Being II: Data File User's Manual Restricted Release Version. Ithaca, New York: National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect; 2010.