

NCHAT Quick Start Documentation: VDE (Main Survey)

The National Couples' Health and Time Study (NCHAT) quick start documentation is intended to help new users become quickly oriented with a few key aspects of the NCHAT study. Topics covered include 1) sample size, 2) weighting, 3) supplemented demographic variables, 4) multiple partners, and 5) the overall inclusivity (select all that apply) design of the study. More details about these topics can be found in the NCHAT Methodology Document and the NCHAT Survey Weights Document, which are located on our [website](#) and at [DSDR](#), and the NCHAT codebooks, which are located at [DSDR](#).

NCHAT and future waves of NCHAT data rely on securing funding from external sources. Please be sure to cite the study in your presentations and manuscripts so that we can track and report data use. Our recommended citation for the data is:

Kamp Dush, C., Manning, W., & Berrigan, M. (2020). National Couples' Health and Time Study Wave 1 Questionnaire. <https://pop.umn.edu/data/nchat/nchat-data-and-documentation>

Please also use the following statement to acknowledge the funders of NCHAT:

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1. Sample Size

The survey includes 3,642 main respondents who meet the sample criteria. The codebook includes details about the variables and values for each variable located at [DSDR](#) (there are different versions of the codebook for the public-use and VDE data). Not all respondents are asked every question, so some questions have smaller numbers of respondents (these are indicated by a -99, -97, etc. in the codebook).

2. NCHAT Weights

NCHAT sampling weights minimize bias in survey-based estimates. To appropriately account for the design effect from weighting, and to obtain accurate standard errors, an analysis package that can take into account the sampling design should be used (e.g., Stata, MPlus). Each NCHAT data file will have a weighting variable.

Main Survey

Weight_mainrespondent is the constructed weight variable to be used for the analysis of the main respondent file. This weight should be used when analyzing data from primary respondents and will generate nationally representative estimates of individuals aged 20 to 60 who are living or cohabiting with a partner. This weight can also be used to generate

representative estimates when analyzing sub-groups, such as individuals who are in a same-gender or different-gender couple, or individuals who are gay, lesbian, or bisexual.

Weight_couple is the constructed weight variable to be used for the analysis of couple level data from primary respondents and their partners. This weight should be used when analyzing the dyadic data (primary and partner responses). Cases from the primary respondents and partner respondents should not be treated as individual cases and combined to create a larger sample of individual adults. Weights are not valid for this purpose. Further, this type of analysis would require accounting for clustering within couples and potentially highly correlated responses (intraclass correlation). It is recommended that researchers do not take this approach.

3. Supplemented Demographic Variables

In order to be weighted, main respondents needed to answer age, sex, gender, partner gender, partner sex, sexual identity, race, ethnicity, and education level. Age, gender, and partner gender are necessary to determine age eligibility for the study and if the respondent is part of the same-gender or different-gender group. Sexual identity, race, ethnicity, and education level are necessary for post-stratification weighting (more details about the weighting process and why these key variables were selected can be found in the NCHAT Methodology Document). Some respondents did have item-level missing data on one or more key demographic questions, despite answering the majority of other survey questions. Age had the most missing data, which is likely due to the way the question was asked (asking date of birth versus asking age). To have as much data as possible, the team decided to impute missing demographic questions using known demographic information in the sample records. This was carried out for age, gender, race, ethnicity, and education level. The original survey data has been retained in the file. A second imputed variable also appears in the file. If a case was missing a response in the original variable, the imputed variable contains the response from the sample frame database, if a response was available. All imputed variables have *_SUPP* at the end of the original variable name. To maximize sample size, we recommend using these supplemented variables.

Supplemented Variables

1. Age (AGE_SD_SUPP)
2. Gender (D2_SUPP)
3. Race (RACE_1_SUPP through RACE_15_SUPP)
4. Ethnicity (HISP_SUPP)
5. Education level (D3_SUPP)

4. Multiple Partners

In NCHAT, respondents could report if they had more than one partner/spouse living in their household. There were 34 main respondents that provided demographic information for more than one partner. In this situation, main respondents were asked to indicate which of these partners they spent the most time with and were told to think about this partner when answering the survey questions. For these cases where the respondent had more than one survey partner, the partner indicated as the “main” partner was used in weighting. In the public use main

respondent data file, information for only one partner was retained. In the Virtual Data Enclave, full information about multiple partners can be found.

5. Inclusivity

The NCHAT survey was designed to be as inclusive as possible with the goal of being gender-neutral and *not* cis-heteronormative. Given this goal, the NCHAT survey included many open-ended text responses (which can only be accessed in the Virtual Data Enclave) and “select all that apply” questions. It is important to carefully consider and fully acknowledge how you collapse variables, as many identities can be erased in collapsing processes, including racial, ethnic, sexual, and gender identities.

Please look for our Frequently Asked Questions on the web page where we will answer common questions. This will be updated as new questions emerge from the user community.