Subject: Including people aged 50 and over
Posted by RachelAlbone on Thu, 03 Apr 2014 16:43:50 GMT
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DHS collects a wealth of information across a range of crucial health, social and economic issues. This data is important in building a comprehensive evidence base on these issues to inform appropriate policy and programmatic responses. With the survey currently only administered with people up to the age of 49 a data gap exists for people in their 50s and older, leading to their neglect in policies and programmes. DHS needs to be expanded to include people over the age of 49 to fill this gap.

As the DHS template has been expanded to include new questions and new sections, its relevance to people aged 50 and over has increased. While some of the survey will remain restricted to younger women, the majority of the sections should be asked to women and men over the age of 49. The following sections are of most relevance to people in the older age group:

Women's survey:
Respondent's background
Reproduction (some questions)
Marriage and sexual activity
Husband's background and woman's work
HIV
Other health issues

Men's survey:
Respondent's background
Reproduction (some questions)
Marriage and sexual activity
Employment and gender roles
HIV
Other health issues

Some specific examples of why these sections are relevant:

Respondent's background: the inclusion of questions on educational attainment and literacy rates are relevant to all people. It is important to have data on literacy levels for both younger and older people. Data that does exist shows lower levels of literacy among older people than younger, highlighting a need for targeted interventions to address the challenges older people face. For example, data from Mozambique shows literacy for women aged 15-60 is 36.5%, compared with 6.4% for women 65 and over.

Marriage and sexual activity: women and men remain sexually active in their 50s and beyond and have sexual and reproductive health needs in older age. Increased data is needed to understand and be able to respond to these needs.

Husband's background and woman's work/employment and gender roles: people continue to work into their older age - more than 70 per cent of men and nearly 40 per cent of women aged 60 and over. Data suggest the majority are engaged in the informal economy. Data is limited on this issue

and DHS could provide an additional source of information on the extent to which people in their 50s and over work and the type of work they are engaged in.

Questions on gender roles and women's empowerment are also relevant to older people. The need to promote gender equality, women's decision making, participation and broader empowerment, does not stop when a woman reaches her 50th birthday.

HIV: see separate post in the HIV section