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Subject: Re: Qualitative studies on maternal and newborn health question validity  
Posted by [Janet-DHS](#) on Wed, 15 Feb 2023 14:46:04 GMT

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Following is a response from DHS staff member, Tom Pullum:

The DHS questions are based on indicators developed by international organizations, mainly the World Health Organization. Most of the core questions are very specific, about numbers, dates, durations, whether something specific did or did not happen, what type of facility or provider was used, etc. Some questions are definitely sensitive, for example those related to domestic violence, sexual activity, disabilities, or use of alcohol, and some are not factual or verifiable, such as those about fertility preferences, ideal family size, etc. The questions about sensitive topics and attitudes have a long history or come from other sources, such as the Washington Group for disabilities and WHO for use of alcohol. When new modules are developed, the questions are always tested in a pilot survey, but I don't believe there have been publications describing the results of pilot surveys and subsequent revisions. Many surveys include survey-specific questions initiated by the country, and it's up to the country to specify the wording.

Most questionnaires are translated into local languages, with careful checking and the use of reverse translation to ensure that the meaning is preserved, but there is probably some slippage during translation.

The qualitative or mixed-methods research that DHS has published appears in the Qualitative Research Studies (QRS), such as QRS17, which you cite. We do not maintain any resources on the origins of specific questions or how they may have been field-tested for reliability and validity before being adopted.

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