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Subject: Re: Age at marriage

Posted by [Bridgette-DHS](#) on Wed, 11 Dec 2024 12:10:28 GMT

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

When estimating a percentage of responses that are "yes", it is general practice at DHS to classify responses such as "don't know" and "maybe" with "no". You will find many examples. For example, the standard questionnaire includes a question "are you pregnant now?" The possible responses are "yes", "no", and "unsure". In the tables, "unsure" is classified with "no". As another example, in the calculation of HIV or malaria prevalence, ambiguous test results are grouped with negative.

Years ago, to be frank, I got into a debate at DHS regarding this practice. In particular, I argued that ambiguous HIV results should be removed from the denominator rather than being grouped with the negative results--the sort of argument you would make for ANC visits. However, I lost the argument.

Let's just say that having a standard policy means that you don't have to go through variable-by-variable interpretation of what is meant by "unsure", "maybe", "don't know", "not stated", etc. You just always group them with "no," producing a conservative estimate of the percentage "yes".

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