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Subject: Re: Marriage

Posted by [Bridgette-DHS](#) on Mon, 28 Dec 2015 16:15:32 GMT

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Following is a response from Senior DHS Stata Specialist, Kerry MacQuarrie

There are three documents that I like to have handy as I familiarize myself with any new DHS dataset:

(1) The DHS Recode Manual ( <http://www.dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-DHSG4-DHS-Questionnaires-and-Manuals.cfm>)

(2) The Guide to DHS Statistics ( <http://www.dhsprogram.com/publications/publication-DHSG1-DHS-Questionnaires-and-Manuals.cfm>)

(3) The questionnaire for the survey I'm using. This is found as an appendix in the Final Report. For India's NFHS-3, it is in a separate volume (<http://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/FRIND3/FRIND3-VOL2.pdf>). While we have a standard DHS core questionnaire also available on The DHS Program website, I like to consult the one found in the Final Report because it will show any country-specific questions or other deviations from the core questionnaire.

In this case, you'll see that questions on marriage begin in section 3a of the individual woman's questionnaire (page 69). Questions 301-307 and 309 refer to the present marriage. Questions 309a-314 refer to the first marriage. Question 308 asks women if they have been married once or more than once (corresponds to variable s308). A tabulation of this variable shows that, of the 94,194 women who have ever been married, the vast majority--92,133--have been married only once; only 2,057 women have been married more than once (30,191 never married women are excluded from this variable). So for 92,133 women (98% of the married sample), the present marriage data found in the variables corresponding to questions 301-307, 309 also refers to the first marriage and the first marriage data found in variables corresponding to questions 309a-314 refers to the present marriage. S308 is the variable to use to determine if data pertains to the first or present marriage for the 2,057 women who have been married more than once.

For the 2,057 women who have been married more than once, we have more limited information pertaining to the first marriage. Namely, data from questions 303-307 inquiring about whether the spouses are living together or about husbands' other wives ONLY refer to the present marriage. We do not collect this data on prior/first marriages. Additionally, date and age of marriage is only collected for the first marriage. With one potentially helpful exception, as described in the instructions for question 314. The reproductive calendar includes data on the timing of the termination of the first/previous marriage and the start of the present marriage IF these events occurred during the 5-year period for which calendar data is collected (January 2001-date of interview). For some subset of the 2,057 women, you will have the date that present marriage began and you can calculate age at present marriage. The DHS Recode Manual is particularly helpful to understanding the structure of the calendar data if you plan to go this route.

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