Subject: Keep Secret indicator
Posted by loubarlow00 on Wed, 13 May 2015 01:27:06 GMT
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Hi all--

We're doing a cross-country analysis on secular trends in HIV stigma in sub-Saharan Africa. One of the variables we're looking at is the "Keep Secret" indicator (Question 933, "would not want to keep the HIV+ status of a family member a secret.")

Our analysis includes DHSs from 2003-2013. It appears that for every year from 2003-2008, the mean % of respondents answering yes to this question was steady at around 55-60% (across all sub-Saharan African countries). But starting in 2009, the mean % of respondents answering yes decreased suddenly to around 45% and has stayed that way since then.

It's an interesting, continent-wide phenomenon that we are having trouble explaining. There doesn't seem to be a change in the question wording as far as I can tell. What could have happened in 2008 to explain this sharp and sustained decrease in the % of respondents who would not want to keep the HIV+ status of a family member a secret? Adjusting for sex, age, etc. doesn't change this finding substantively.

Any ideas would be much appreciated!

Brian

Subject: Re: Keep Secret indicator
Posted by Trevor-DHS on Mon, 18 May 2015 18:59:46 GMT
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Thanks for pointing this out. We see a similar pattern to the pattern you see, although we don't see the sharp change in 2009, but rather see a change over time. We checked wording of the questions and recoding and while we see a couple of small anomalies in wording we don't see a consistent difference. We suspect that this indicator is not capturing the concept of stigma as was originally intended, but that rather we think that the decrease you are seeing is for two reasons:
1) This question may be saying more about human rights and the right of the individual to keep it a secret, rather than issues of stigma.
2) The indicator is based on a negative response to this question, where the other stigma indicators are based on positive responses to the questions.

The wording of this question and the understanding of the indicator has always been problematic and in the recent modification of the DHS questionnaire for DHS phase 7 this question was dropped from the questionnaire.

I think you might have an interesting paper on this.

Subject: Re: Keep Secret indicator
Posted by loubarlow00 on Tue, 19 May 2015 17:05:12 GMT
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Thanks very much, Trevor.
Brian