Dear all,

I am currently working on the timing of the following events with NFHS 4: age at first intercourse, age at first cohabitation, age at first marriage.

For age at first intercourse, I am using the variable v531.
But when it comes to age at first cohabitation/marriage, I'm not sure which variable I should use.
- variable v511 gives age at first cohabitation
- the variable s314c gives us the age at the first union (calculated) and its values are similar to those of the variable v511 (but not quite -> ex: 8 years)
- there is also variable s308y which gives us the year of first marriage and variable s309 which completes it (if I understood correctly) by giving the age of persons who did not know the year of their marriage

My questions are the following:
1) Do the variables v511 and s314c give us the same information? If so, are the first cohabitation and the first union considered to be exactly the same event? If so, how can we explain the differences between the two variables?
2) Are variables v511 and s314c related to variables s308y and s309? If not, which one is preferable to use for age at first marriage/union?
3) For a first sexual intercourse occurring in the same year as a first cohabitation/marriage, can one deduce which occurs first?
4) How much do you estimate the prevalence of an age at first intercourse lower than an age at first cohabitation?

Thank you very much for your help!

Subject: Re: NFHS4: age at first intercourse, age at first cohabitation, age at first marriage
Posted by Trevor-DHS on Wed, 26 Aug 2020 19:46:47 GMT

You are correct about your interpretation of the variables.
1) V511 and s314c are the same except that in s314c there are cases included (incorrectly) for women for whom Gauna was not performed. Use v511.
2) V511 and S314 come from questions 313 and 314 in the questionnaire and are about the date and age of first union or cohabitation. S308Y and S309 are from questions 308 and 309 in the questionnaire and are about the date and age of first marriage. Formal marriage can come years before union/cohabitation, and may happen at very young ages of childhood. Thus we use the age and date of first union/cohabitation as the main variable that we use.
3) No, we can't tell which came first of first sexual intercourse occurring in the same year as a first
4) You can compare the age at first sex in years with the age at first cohabitation, but that will only tell you if there was a difference in reported age, not which came first if both are reported at the same age.

Your questions highlighted an issue in the recode datasets. Variables V509, V511 and S314C should include all women ever in union including those that are now widowed, divorced, separated or divorced. However the variables currently do not include those formerly in union, and at present are limited only to those currently married. V509 and S314C do, though, incorrectly include cases reported as Married, Gauna not performed - these latter cases should be excluded from any analysis. This same issue exists in the men's recode dataset too.

Subject: Re: NFHS4: age at first intercourse, age at first cohabitation, age at first marriage
Posted by Rojin S. on Tue, 08 Sep 2020 07:33:14 GMT
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Thank you very much for those answers! These data are much clearer now, especially for those that incorrectly include gauna. It's a pity that variables V509, V511 and S314C contain only currently married women. Will this be corrected in the updates? Thank you again.

Subject: Re: NFHS4: age at first intercourse, age at first cohabitation, age at first marriage
Posted by Trevor-DHS on Tue, 08 Sep 2020 13:49:00 GMT
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These will be corrected in an update in the future.