
Subject: Age at menarche

Posted by [user-rhs](#) on Tue, 25 Mar 2014 16:26:57 GMT

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Suggestion type: Additions

1. What is the information needed?

Age at menarche

2. What questions will elicit this information?

Question: How old were you at the time you experienced your first menstruation?

Response coding: ___ ___ years, 96-Never menstruated, 98-Don't know

Indicate whether or not the questions have ever been fielded or validated.

This question was asked as a country-specific variable in the Uganda 2000-2001 DHS.

3. How will the resulting information be used?

In many contexts, a girl or young woman is married soon after she her first menstruation. In other contexts, a young woman may have her first sexual encounter after menarche. Age at menarche is therefore a potentially important contextual variable when investigating age at marriage, age at sexual debut, number of sexual partners, age at first birth, highest level of education, and lifetime fertility. This indicator can be used for programmatic purposes, for example, knowing the average age at menarche within a region can help health educators tailor adolescent HIV prevention messages in that region. This information can also be useful in developing programs to prevent marriages of girls under age 18 (child marriage) to target parents, teachers, and the children themselves about delaying marriage or fertility. This variable can be used either as a control variable in regression models or as an instrument (e.g. for education, age at marriage, etc.) in simultaneous equation models. Even if age at menarche is not truly exogenous, it can be used as a proxy for the woman's wealth during childhood and adolescence, as menarche is influenced by her nutritional and socioeconomic status leading up to it, in addition to environmental and genetic factors.

4. What is the priority of suggested additions compared with what is already in the questionnaires?

This question supplements the other questions on menstruation, so no deletions are suggested at this point. In the Uganda 2000-2001 DHS, this question was asked directly after question 235/236 on pregnancy termination (as question 236A) and directly before question 237 on the person's most recent menstrual period.

5. If suggesting more than one addition, what is the priority among the suggested additions?

N/A

6. Should the additional data be collected in all countries, or only in selected types of countries (e.g., countries with a particular type of program, countries with prevalence of a particular infection >5% or 10%)?

These data should be collected in all countries for the reasons mentioned in bullet point #3 above.
