

## NATIONAL SURVEY OF FAMILY GROWTH, CYCLE 7

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**Supporting Statement for Request for Clearance:  
NATIONAL SURVEY OF FAMILY GROWTH, CYCLE 7**

**Abstract**

This is a request to make 11 revisions to the questionnaires for the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) ---OMB No. 0920-0314, for Years 2 and 3 of Cycle 7/Continuous Interviewing. Clearance was granted for 3 years on April 14, 2006. This survey is conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). It provides nationally representative data on factors related to birth and pregnancy rates, sexually transmitted diseases, and family formation including marriage, divorce, and adoption. The data are used by NCHS and seven other DHHS programs that support the survey. The survey is administered in person, in English and Spanish. In each year of interviewing, it is expected that about 4,400 men and women 15-44 years of age will be interviewed. So far, fieldwork is going well in Cycle 7, and we expect to achieve these targets.

We are not opening up entirely new content areas with these changes; they are incremental, but they do fill gaps that have been revealed in the analysis of the Cycle 6 data and in our own preliminary assessments of the Year 1 questionnaire. In addition, the changes here constitute less than one percent of the data file, and do not increase the previously approved interview length, or burden.

The new continuous interviewing design we introduced in 2006 is working very well so far. Cost efficiency and labor productivity are higher than in the 2002 (Cycle 6) survey. We will continue to fine-tune this design, but no major changes in the design are anticipated. In 4 ½ calendar years of data collection, a national sample of over 19,000 interviews will be collected in 110 Primary Sampling Units, providing the largest national sample ever collected in the NSFG. This will make possible national estimates with as little as 2 or 2.5 years of data, while estimates for small groups can be obtained by cumulating data for a group of consecutive years. Once clearance is received, we will hold interviewer training in June of 2007 and implement the new questions in July, 2007. July is the beginning of Year 2 of the survey. These revisions are expected to continue in years 3 and 4 of the survey. The survey web site is at <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg.htm>

**A. Justification**

**1. Circumstances Making the Information Collection Necessary**

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), under its duties specified in 42 U.S.C. 242k, Section 306(b) of the Public Health Service Act, Paragraph 1H (Attachment **A1**), conducts the National Survey of Family Growth to

- (1) supplement the data from birth certificates with survey data on factors related to “family formation, growth, and dissolution,” and
- (2) to serve a variety of data needs in public health programs (listed below).

The survey was fielded periodically—in 1973, 1976, 1982, 1988, 1995, and 2002. In surveys through 1995, the NSFG was a multi-purpose statistical survey based upon a national sample of women, and focused on factors affecting pregnancy and birth rates, including marriage, divorce, and cohabitation, adoption, sexual behavior, childbearing and pregnancy outcomes, infertility and infertility services, contraceptive use, and family planning services.

In Cycle 6, for the first time, the NSFG also interviewed an independent national sample of men, to obtain data on men's behavior and attitudes related to having and raising children, marriage and family formation, and reproductive health. In 2002, NCHS and its contractor, the Institute for Social Research (ISR) at the University of Michigan, conducted Cycle 6, the largest cycle of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) ever conducted, including 7,643 women and 4,928 men 15-44 years of age. The weighted response rate was 79 percent, comparable with previous cycles of the survey.

In year 1 of Cycle 7, now underway, NCHS is collecting data to carry out its own responsibilities, and for other agencies and programs in DHHS that contribute funding for the NSFG:

- the Office of Family Planning, Office of Population Affairs (OPA), DHHS, under 42 U.S.C. 300a (Section 1009 of Title X of the Public Health Service Act);
- the Adolescent Family Life Program of the Office of Adolescent Pregnancy Programs, Office of Population Affairs, DHHS, under 42 U.S.C. 300z (Section 2001 of the Public Health Service Act);
- the National Institute for Child Health and Human Development, Public Health Service, under 42 U.S.C. 241 (Section 301 of the Public Health Service Act);
- the Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention (DHAP) of the National Center for HIV, Sexually Transmitted Disease, and Tuberculosis Prevention (NCHSTP);
- the Division of Reproductive Health of the CDC, under Section 301 of the Public Health Service Act);
- the Children's Bureau of the Administration for Children, Youth, and Families, Office of Human Development Services, under PL 96-272, the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act of 1980;
- the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation (OASPE), under Section 301 of the Public Health Service Act;
- and a new funding/collaborating agency, the Division of Sexually Transmitted Disease Prevention of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The data needs of the agencies that will be served by Cycle 7 were summarized in the full clearance package. Attachment **B1** of the main package discusses in detail the need for information collected in the female questionnaire, and Attachment **B2** justifies the topics covered

in the male questionnaire, focusing particularly on the sensitive information that they collect. With this request, we have included Attachment **B3**, which summarizes briefly the new questions being collected, and the justifications for their inclusion.

The purpose of the new continuous interview design that we are currently implementing is to collect the data more frequently, with larger sample sizes, at a lower cost per completed interview. Our preliminary results suggest that we are attaining this goal. Response rates are comparable to Cycle 6, and the principal measure of productivity—the number of interviewer hours per completed interview—has improved from 11.3 hours per completed interview to 8.5 hours, a 25% improvement. After several years of discussion and research, this cycle is implementing that more cost-efficient design, which reduces the number of Primary Sampling Unites (PSU's) that are being used at a given time, and collects the data continuously (every year), rather than trying to collect all the data in several months, as in previous cycles. This design makes the survey more manageable and more cost-efficient, and provides data every year, which is essential for monitoring trends adequately.

In addition, this design gives the NSFG's sponsoring agencies a chance to respond to needs for data on new topics, by adding or modifying a limited number of questions in any year, instead of having to wait up to 7 years for a new cycle of the survey. This year's changes include several examples of our being responsive to new data needs, increasing the usefulness of the survey to its federal agency sponsors and their constituents.

## 2. Purpose and Use of Information Collection

The National Survey of Family Growth responds to the congressional mandate for NCHS to collect and publish reliable national statistics on “family formation, growth, and dissolution” (Sec. 306(b), paragraph 1(H) of the Public Health Service Act), and a number of aspects of health status and health care.

From Cycle 6 (2002), NCHS alone has produced 10 major statistical reports, containing more than 330 statistical tables and over 550 pages of printed results. PDF files of all 10 of these reports may be downloaded from: <http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg.htm>. A bibliography of the 45 known publications from the 2002 survey is also on the web site, at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/C6PubsbyDate-web\\_092506.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/C6PubsbyDate-web_092506.pdf)

In addition, the Cycle 6 (2002) public use data were released on fully documented CD-ROMS and on downloadable files on the NCHS/NSFG web page, and additional data files are available for use through the NCHS Research Data Center.

Further comments here will be restricted to the new items that we are proposing to collect. Question-by-Question justifications for the new questions are shown in **Attachment B3**.

## 11. Questions of a Sensitive Nature

The survey was approved by the NCHS “Research Ethics Review Board” (the name NCHS uses for its IRB) in January of 2006. A continuation for 1 year (the maximum continuation) was approved on December 21, 2006. The questions submitted here are currently being prepared for submission to the NCHS ERB. We expect that the Board will review the questions at its March, 2007 meeting.

The justifications for sensitive (and non-sensitive) questions in the NSFG questionnaires for males and females are discussed in detail in Attachments B1 and B2 of the main OMB supporting statement, submitted and approved by OMB in 2006. Justifications of the new questions are shown in Attachment **B3**, included with this request. Note that the most sensitive questions in survey are asked at the end of the interview---in the self-administered **Audio Computer-Assisted Self-Interviewing (ACASI)** section. In ACASI, the respondent listens to the questions over headphones, or reads them on the screen of the notebook computer, and enters his or her own answers into the computer. The computer is then locked and the interviewer cannot get into it—thus ensuring the respondent’s complete privacy.

## 12. Estimates of Annualized Burden Hours and Costs

The mean interview length was estimated at about 80 minutes for females and 60 minutes for males. Experience in the first 2 quarters (6 months) of interviewing shows that the average interview length is actually less than expected—71 minutes for women (9 minutes under the target) and 52 minutes for men (8minutes under the target). The new questions we are proposing are expected to add about 3 minutes for women and 2 minutes for men, increasing length to 74 minutes for women and 54 for men—6 minutes under the previously approved lengths for both men and women. Since the burden is an annual estimate over 3 years, we propose to keep the burden as was originally approved.

NOTE: There are many possible reasons for the low interview lengths. However, we know that about  $\frac{3}{4}$  of these interviewers worked on Cycle 6 of the NSFG. This indicator and other information suggests to us that this group of only 40 interviewers is more knowledgeable and more efficient than the previous group of 260 interviewers, and they move through the interview more efficiently than the last group did.

Burden table is on next page:

Estimated Annualized Respondent Table

Respondents /Instrument	No. of Respondents	Responses per Respondent	Average Burden/Response (in hours)	Total Burden Hours
PRETEST				
Screener	403	1	5/60	34
Males	109	1	1	109
Females	133	1	1.33	177
MAIN STUDY				
Screener	7,250	1	5/60	604
Males	1,957	1	1	1,957
Females	2,393	1	1.33	3,183
VERIFICATION	725	1	5/60	60
TESTING OF ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS	2,000	1	10/60	333
TOTAL				6,457

## **B. Statistical Methods**

### **1. Respondent Universe and Sampling Methods**

Summary--The sample design is unchanged. The National Survey of Family Growth, Cycle 7 is based on a national probability sample, drawn from 110 Primary Sampling Units (PSUs). To control costs, in any one year, one-fourth of the total sample will be interviewed in 33-35 PSU's. At the end of 4 years, a full 110-PSU design will have been completed. The data will be collected annually and continuously, at the rate of about 4,400 interviews per year. Each year, about 7,500 households will be contacted, in order to yield the required 4,400 interviews. Each year of data is an independent national sample, but the full sample of 110 PSU's will be completed in 4 years. [There is no change in this plan for year 2.](#)

The NSFG is a personal visit survey. Telephone contacts are permitted only to  
 (a) arrange appointments for interviews after the screener has been conducted; and  
 (b) for 3-5 minute verification interviews to ensure that the respondent was interviewed.

### **2. Procedures for the Collection of Information**

The sample size targets are unchanged from the original supporting statement. However, the increased efficiency we are obtaining so far—if it continues—will make it less

expensive and more efficient to obtain those counts.

Cycle 7 Main Study Sample Size Targets				
<u>Cycle 7</u>				
				<u>Cycle</u>
				<u>6</u>
				<u>1.5Years</u>
				<u>2.5 years</u>
				<u>4.5 years</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>				<b>12,571</b>
				<b>6,600</b>
				<b>11,000</b>
				<b>19,800</b>
Hispanic				2,712
				1,313
				2,190
				3,940
Black			2,460	1,340
				2,230
				4,020
White & other				7,399
				3,945
				5,265
				11,840
Male				4,928
				2,965
				4,945
				8,900
Female	7,643	3,633	6,055	10,900
15-19 years of age				2,271
				1,200
				2,000
				3,600

20-44 years of age	10,300
	5,400
	9,000
	16,200

**5. Statistical Consultants**

Further information on the fieldwork status and design of the NSFG is available from the Field Director, Nicole Kirgis, at 734-647-4472, or [nkirgis@isr.umich.edu](mailto:nkirgis@isr.umich.edu), or from the contractor’s Project Director: Robert M. Groves, Ph.D., who is also the Director of the Survey Research Center at the University of Michigan. Phone: 734-647-6078  
E-mail: [bgroves@isr.umich.edu](mailto:bgroves@isr.umich.edu)

The person responsible for the analysis of the survey is: William D. Mosher, Ph.D, Project Officer for NCHS. His contact information is on page 1.