



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Public Health Service

National Institutes of Health
Eunice Kennedy Shriver National
Institute of Child Health and
Human Development
Bethesda, Maryland 20892

NICHD, Population Dynamics Branch

April 2, 2021

Anjani Chandra, Ph.D.
NSFG Principal Investigator
Division of Vital Statistics
National Center for Health Statistics
3311 Toledo Road
Hyattsville, MD 20782

Dear Dr. Chandra:

I am pleased to provide information about how the NICHD plans to use the data that will be collected in the upcoming rounds of the National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG). Programming for the survey is an example of coordination across multiple components of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), and we anticipate continuing to provide funding for implementation of the NSFG into the future. This response primarily reflects the interests of the NICHD Population Dynamics Branch (PDB); however, other branches within the NICHD Division of Extramural Research also benefit from use of the NSFG data. For example, the Contraception Research Branch uses data on the uptake and continued use of various contraceptive methods and the Fertility and Infertility Branch uses data on the prevalence of infertility and various methods of treatment. Because of the nationally representative sample used by the NSFG, the NICHD Office of Health Equity and the Gynecologic Health & Disease and Pregnancy & Perinatology Branches are able to fulfill their mission in documenting disparities in reproductive and perinatal health outcomes by socioeconomic status and race and ethnicity. Looking forward, staff from the NICHD's National Center for Medical Rehabilitation Research and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are engaged in an on-going collaboration to collect national data about pregnancy among the U.S. population with disabilities within the Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System (PRAMS) data collection. Because the NSFG includes the DHHS standard questions on disability along with detailed information on fertility among women who are not currently pregnant but have been in the past or may become pregnant in the future and men's fertility, the NSFG is a key complement to that effort.

The PDB relies heavily on population-representative data from principal statistical agencies that compose the U.S. federal statistical system to guide activities relevant to its mission: supporting research on the scientific study of human populations, including fertility, nuptiality, family demography, population growth and decline, and the causes and consequences of demographic change, as well as supporting behavioral and social science research on sexually



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transmitted infections, HIV/AIDS, family planning, and infertility. Over the years, the NSFG has provided essential information on women's and men's fertility, family change, and reproductive health that has shaped programmatic activities and has provided a data resource for analysts seeking to describe and understand demographic behaviors and trends. NSFG data also provide important information on same-sex behavior and identity which supports the NIH's Strategic Plan to Advance Research on the Health and Well-Being of Sexual & Gender Minorities Fiscal Years 2021-2025. As noted by NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins in the introduction to that document, "Challenges remain in the collection and analysis of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data" (https://dpcpsi.nih.gov/sites/default/files/SGMStrategicPlan_2021_2025.pdf, p.1).

NICHD would like to thank NSFG staff for providing opportunities for the scientific community to weigh in on potential changes to the NSFG by holding a series of research conferences and funders meetings. The transition to continuous interviewing has been extraordinarily successful. Data are now regularly updated and quickly disseminated to the research community. The continuous interviewing structure also allows NSFG staff to conduct experiments to increase response rates and to update and add items to meet the current needs of the scientific community. For example, NSFG staff have worked collaboratively with NICHD staff over recent months to develop items on the initiation of menstruation, which is a specific implementation action stemming from the NICHD's Strategic Plan 2020.

The 2022-2029 data collection provides the NICHD with essential data to inform the evaluation and development of NICHD funding priorities in reproductive health, and provides an important resource for extramural scientists supported by NICHD. We thank the NCHS for continuing this important research endeavor.

Sincerely,

Rosalind King, Ph.D.

Program Director, Population Dynamics Branch

Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human
Development

CC: Rebecca L. Clark, Ph.D., Chief, Population Dynamics Branch, NICHD