



Questions and answers from IPUMS DHS webinar on calendar data

August 24, 2022

Do the data include information on why a woman is not using contraception?

For some samples, the survey calendar only included questions on births, pregnancies, and pregnancy terminations, but most samples include information on contraceptive use. For most samples with information on contraceptive use, the variable CALREASON reports why a woman stopped using a contraceptive method after a spell of use. There is, however, no information about why some women chose not to start using contraception.

Does this talk cover the use of reproductive health services such as antenatal and postnatal service use.

No, those topics are not covered by the calendar data. However, all variables relating to women can be used along with the calendar variables using IPUMS DHS data, so you could make a data file with those variables on antenatal and postnatal care and calendar variables for your own use.

Thank you for the helpful information! Are the data precise as to the month? Or also day, given specific date of conception and birth?

The calendar data are by month, so there is no information about the specific day of the month in the calendar data. However, women's variables on reproduction that are not part of the calendar data, such as KIDDOBCMC (last birth) and KIDDOBCMC_ALL (all births), provide specific dates for births and can be combined with calendar variables in your data file.

I would like to know if information is collected for rural women in sub-Saharan African countries.

Yes, the calendar data cover both rural and urban women, and many sub-Saharan African countries are included. Use the variable URBAN to identify which cases are from urban versus rural areas.

Are there data available on survey response rate?

You can find survey response rates in the first chapter of each survey's Final Report. You can find links to surveys' Final Reports if you click on "Questionnaires" in the left sidebar of the IPUMS

DHS homepage (https://www.idhsdata.org/idhs/enum_materials.shtml). Or you can do a Google search for “DHS Final Report” and whatever country and year you are interested in.

The data seem to leave out Emergency Contraception. Can it be included?

A minority of samples included Emergency Contraception as a specific method for family planning. In the variable CALREPROD_ALLEVENTS, Emergency Contraception is given a code of 008. You may wish to limit your selected samples to those showing an X rather than a dot (.) for Emergency Contraception in the codes and frequencies page for CALREPROD_ALLEVENTS. For other samples, Emergency Contraception was presumably included under “Other modern methods” (code 050 in CALREPROD_ALLEVENTS) but cannot be distinguished.

Does termination of pregnancy differentiate between a miscarriage and abortion?

A reported pregnancy termination may indicate a miscarriage, an abortion, or a stillbirth. However, some samples asked additional questions about the specific types of pregnancy termination. The variables CALABORT, CALMISCAR, and CALSBIRTH indicate whether an abortion, miscarriage, or stillbirth, respectively, occurred during the month.

Some researchers make estimates related to abortion with the DHS data that are available, even when the data do not explicitly include this information. See, e.g., Brooks, N., Bendavid, E., & Miller, G. (2019). USA aid policy and induced abortion in sub-Saharan Africa: an analysis of the Mexico City Policy. *The Lancet Global Health*, 7(8), e1046-e1053.

Is access through IPUMS DHS limited to the countries that DHS approved or can IPUMS users access different countries.

The DHS Program legally controls access to DHS data, so access through IPUMS DHS is limited to the countries you are approved for on The DHS Program website. However, it is usually not a problem to get access to all countries of interest on the DHS website, except for samples designated as non-public by the participating country.

Does the data access have an expiration date?

No, once The DHS Program approves your access to data from a country, you continue to have access to data from that country, either from IPUMS DHS or from The DHS Program website.

How long do you have to download your IPUMS DHS data file after creating it?

Data files requested via IPUMS DHS are only available for download for a short period of time (about 72 hours) to preserve room on our servers. It is easy to recreate one of your data files,

however. Click on the "My Data" link on the IPUMS DHS home page. Then click on "revise" or "resubmit" for the data file you need.

Do the dates in the calendar data file match the dates in the births file and other data files.

Non-calendar data on the dates of all births were collected by asking women of childbearing age, "In what day, month, and year was (NAME) born?" for up to 20 births during the Reproduction section of the women's questionnaire. This same question was the basis for reported date of birth for children under age 5 in the child data files.

For samples with calendar data, immediately after recording information on each birth (including date of birth, and each child's sex, current age, and survival status), interviewers were prompted to fill in the calendar data collection form on birth dates. Specifically, "For each birth since January of [survey interview year] enter "B" in the month of birth in column 2 of the calendar. Also enter the month and year of birth of the most recent birth prior to January [Year] (if any) at the bottom of the calendar." Thus, the interviewer used the information collected on birth dates in the reproduction interview to complete the calendar data form, so there should be consistency across these variables in most cases. If the interviewer made a mistake when filling in the calendar data form (putting a "B" into the box for the wrong month), then the two sources of information could be out of sync.

Can we get the data through an API?

We do not currently have a microdata extract API, but we plan to implement such a tool in the next year. API is already functional for some IPUMS projects; IPUMS DHS is not far off.

Is there sample code or a tutorial for exploring the calendar data?

Yes. See [Using Calendar Data in Single Month Format: Three Practice Exercises](#) and [Using IPUMS DHS Calendar Data to Create Event Files](#).