

# NATIONAL HEALTH INFORMATION SURVEY (NHIS)

## Years Survey Included Sexual and Gender Minority (SGM)-Related Questions

2013–Present

### Survey Description

The main objective of the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) is to monitor the health of the United States population through collection and analysis of data on a broad range of health topics. NHIS data are widely used throughout the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to monitor trends in illness and disability and to track progress toward achieving national health objectives. NHIS data are also used by the public health research community for epidemiologic and policy analysis of such timely issues as characterizing those with various health problems, determining barriers to accessing and using appropriate health care, and evaluating federal health programs.

### Survey Sample Population

The sample population of the NHIS is noninstitutionalized U.S. adults ages 18 and older. Each year, the NHIS conducts a cross-sectional household interview survey of approximately 87,500 persons in 35,000 households. The total NHIS sample is subdivided into four separate panels; each panel represents the civilian, noninstitutionalized population living in the U.S. The NHIS excludes residents in long-term care facilities, active-duty armed forces personnel, and U.S. nationals living abroad. Data collection is carried out continuously throughout the year, producing nationally representative samples each quarter and attenuating potential seasonal biases.

The NHIS sample is drawn from each state and the District of Columbia. Although the sample is too small to provide data with acceptable precision for each state, selected estimates for most states can be obtained by combining data years. The current NHIS sample design does not oversample any race/ethnicity group at the household level. One adult and one child (if applicable) per household are selected for the interview. For the adult selection stage, persons aged 65 and older who are Black, Hispanic, or Asian have a higher chance of being selected. For the family core component, adult members of the household 17 years of age and older are invited to respond to the survey themselves. For the Sample Adult Questionnaire, one civilian adult per family is randomly selected. Information for the Sample Child questionnaire is obtained from the parent or guardian of the child.

Of those approached to participate in the 2017 survey, 49,067 households, 33,527 families, 9,601 children, and 33,143 adults were eligible to participate.

## Survey Mode

The NHIS occurs annually through computer-assisted personal interview (CAPI). Trained interviewers administer the questionnaire and enter responses directly into a laptop computer during the interview. The NHIS questionnaire has Core questions and Supplement questions. The Core questions remain largely unchanged from year to year and allow for trends analysis and for data from more than one year to be pooled, to increase sample size for analytic purposes. The Core contains four major components: Household, Family, Sample Adult, and Sample Child. From each family in the NHIS, one sample adult and one sample child (if any children are present) are randomly selected and information on each is collected with the Sample Adult Core and the Sample Child Core questionnaires. Because some health issues are different for children and adults, these two questionnaires differ in some items, but both collect basic information on health status, health care services, and health behaviors.

## SGM-Related Survey Questions

### Sample Adult Questionnaire

The questions below are asked of NHIS respondents.

Category	Question	Question History
Sexual Identity	(ASI.220_00) Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself? 1. Gay 2. Straight, that is, not gay 3. Bisexual 4. Something else 5. I don't know the answer 7. Refused	This is the only version of the question that has been used.  This question was added to the survey in 2014.  This question is asked of males 18 years of age and older.
	(ASI.230_00) What do you mean by something else? 1. You are not straight, but identify with another label such as queer, trisexual, omnisexual or pansexual 2. You are transgender, transsexual or gender variant 3. You have not figured out or are in the process of figuring out your sexuality 4. You do not think of yourself as having sexuality 5. You do not use labels to identify yourself 6. You mean something else 7. Refused 9. Don't know	This question was asked in the 2013 and 2014 versions of the survey.  This question was asked of males 18 years of age and older who responded "something else" in question ASI.220_00.

Category	Question	Question History
	<p>(ASI. 234_00) What do you mean by don't know?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You don't understand the words</li> <li>2. You understand the words, but you have not figured out or are in the process of figuring out your sexuality</li> <li>3. You mean something else</li> <li>7. Refused</li> <li>9. Don't know</li> </ol>	<p>This question was asked in the 2013 and 2014 versions of the survey.</p> <p>This question was asked of males 18 years of age and older who responded "don't know" to question ASI.230_00.</p>
	<p>(ASI.238_00) What do you mean by something else?</p> <p>Verbatim response</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>97. Refused</li> <li>99. Don't know</li> </ol>	<p>This question was asked in the 2013 and 2014 versions of the survey.</p> <p>This question was asked of males 18 years of age or older who responded "something else" to question ASI.234_00.</p>
	<p>(ASI.240_00) Which of the following best represents how you think of yourself?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lesbian or gay</li> <li>2. Straight, that is, not lesbian or gay</li> <li>3. Bisexual</li> <li>4. Something else</li> <li>5. I don't know the answer</li> <li>7. Refused</li> </ol>	<p>This question was asked in the 2013 and 2014 versions of the survey.</p> <p>This question was asked of female respondents 18 years of age and older.</p>
	<p>(ASI.250_00) What do you mean by something else?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You are not straight, but identify with another label such as queer, trisexual, omnisexual or pansexual</li> <li>2. You are transgender, transsexual or gender variant</li> <li>3. You have not figured out or are in the process of figuring out your sexuality</li> <li>4. You do not think of yourself as having sexuality</li> <li>5. You do not use labels to identify yourself</li> <li>6. You mean something else</li> <li>7. Refused</li> <li>9. Don't know</li> </ol>	<p>This question was asked in the 2013 and 2014 versions of the survey.</p> <p>This question was asked of females 18 years of age and older who responded "something else" in question ASI.220_00.</p>
	<p>(ASI. 254_00) What do you mean by don't know?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You don't understand the words</li> <li>2. You understand the words, but you have not figured out or are in the process of figuring out your sexuality</li> <li>3. You mean something else</li> <li>7. Refused</li> <li>9. Don't know</li> </ol>	<p>This question was asked in the 2013 and 2014 versions of the survey.</p> <p>This question was asked of females 18 years of age and older who responded "don't know" to question ASI.230_00.</p>

Category	Question	Question History
	(ASI.258_00) What do you mean by something else? Verbatim response 97. Refused 99. Don't know	This question was asked in the 2013 and 2014 versions of the survey.  This question was asked of females 18 years of age and older who responded "something else" to question ASI.234_00.
Sexual Attraction	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Sexual Behavior	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Gender Identity	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Household Relationships	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.

### *Family Questionnaire*

The questions below are asked of NHIS respondents.

Category	Question	Question History
Sexual Identity	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Sexual Attraction	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Sexual Behavior	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Gender Identity	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Household Relationships	(FID250_00) [fill: Are you/Is ALIAS] now married, widowed, divorced, separated, never married, or living with a partner? 1 Married 2 Widowed 3 Divorced 4 Separated 5 Never Married 6 Living with partner 7 Refused 9 Don't know	This is the only version of the question that has been used.
	(FID.260.00) Is [fill: your/ALIAS's] spouse living in the household? 1 Yes 2 No 7 Refused 9 Don't know	This is the only version of the question that has been used.

Category	Question	Question History
	(FID.280_00) [fill: Have you/Has ALIAS] ever been married? 1 Yes 2 No 7 Refused 9 Don't know	This is the only version of the question that has been used.
	(FID.290_00) What is [fill: your/ ALIAS's] current legal marital status? 1 Married 2 Widowed 3 Divorced 4 Separated 7 Refused 9 Don't know	This is the only version of the question that has been used.

### ***Household Composition Questionnaire***

The questions below are asked of NHIS respondents.

Category	Question	Question History
Sexual Identity	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Sexual Attraction	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Sexual Behavior	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.
Gender Identity	Currently no questions are asked in this category.	Not applicable.

Category	Question	Question History
Household Relationships	(HHC_260) (same in 2014) (same in 2015) (same in 2016) (same in 2017) (same in 2018) What is [fill1: your/ALIAS's] relationship to [fill2: Reference Person's name/you] 1 Household reference person 2 Spouse (husband/wife) 3 Unmarried Partner 4 Child (biological/adoptive/in-law/step/foster) 5 Child of partner 6 Grandchild 7 Parent (biological/adoptive/in-law/step/foster) 8 Brother/sister (biological/adoptive/in-law/step/foster) 9 Grandparent (Grandmother/Grandfather) 10 Aunt/Uncle 11 Niece/Nephew 12 Other relative 13 Housemate/roommate 14 Roomer/Boarder 15 Other nonrelative 16 Legal guardian 17 Ward 97 Refused 99 Don't know	This is the only version of the question that has been used.

## Response Rates

The average annual response rate for the NHIS is approximately 70% of eligible households in the sample. In 2017, the household response rate was 66.5%. The 2017 conditional family response rate was 98.9% and the unconditional was 66.5%. The 2017 conditional child response rate was 92.1% and the unconditional was 65.7%. The conditional adult response rate was 80.7% and the unconditional was 65.7%. Additional information about these response rates and how they were calculated can be found in Appendix II by following the link below. [ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health\\_Statistics/NCHS/Dataset\\_Documentation/NHIS/2017/srvydesc.pdf](ftp://ftp.cdc.gov/pub/Health_Statistics/NCHS/Dataset_Documentation/NHIS/2017/srvydesc.pdf)

## ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

The NHIS Supplement questions are used to respond to new public health data needs as they arise and are sometimes fielded only once. They may be used to provide additional details on a subject already covered in the Core questions or on a different topic not covered elsewhere in the NHIS.

## Organizations Involved

This survey is conducted through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). The Census Bureau, under a contractual agreement, is the data collection agent for the NHIS. Nationally, the NHIS uses about 600 interviewers, trained and directed by health survey supervisors in each of the 6 Census Bureau Regional Offices.

## Survey Links

### *Questionnaires*

Questionnaires are organized by year and are located on the main NHIS web page under “Questionnaires, Datasets, and Related Documentation.” Selecting a questionnaire, redirects to a directory. There are multiple options for viewing questionnaires and aspects of the questionnaires. To view SGM-related questions, select the “qadult.pdf” option. The following link will take you to the most recent questionnaires page: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/data-questionnaires-documentation.htm>

The Integrated Health Interview Series (IHIS) provides links to all questionnaires included in the NHIS, organized by every year the NHIS has been distributed. The IHIS is funded by the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD). Use the following link to access the information: <https://ihis.ipums.org/ihis/surveys.shtml>

### *Data*

Links to the general survey data can be found under “Questionnaires, Datasets, and Related Documentation” by selecting “Data, Questionnaires, and Related Documentation.” Resources are organized by year in a drop-down menu format. The most recent year’s (2015) data are available here: [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/nhis\\_2015\\_data\\_release.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/nhis_2015_data_release.htm)

### *General Information*

General information on the NHIS can be found in the “About NHIS” section, which includes the purpose and scope, sample design, questionnaire content, and data collection procedures. Use the following link to access the information: [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/about\\_nhis.htm#sample\\_design](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis/about_nhis.htm#sample_design)

## References

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Design and estimation for the National Health Interview Survey, 2006–2015 (2015). <https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/22466>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Summary of Current Surveys and Data Collection Systems. (2015). [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/factsheets/factsheet\\_summary.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/factsheets/factsheet_summary.htm)

University of Minnesota Integrated Health Interview Series. NHIS User Notes. [https://ihis.ipums.org/ihis/userNotes\\_sampledesign.shtml](https://ihis.ipums.org/ihis/userNotes_sampledesign.shtml)