

2015 Adult Functioning and Disability Supplement File (AFD)

Supplemental Questions

The Adult Functioning and Disability supplement (AFD) fielded with the 2015 NHIS Sample Adult module is part of an international project to develop and test improved measures of functioning. Questions are asked about sample adults' functioning in various basic and complex activity domains: vision (difficulty seeing), hearing (difficulty hearing), mobility (difficulty walking, climbing steps, or moving around), communication (difficulty communicating), cognition (difficulty remembering or concentrating), upper body (difficulty with self-care), affect (feelings of being worried, nervous, or anxious; feelings of being depressed), pain, and fatigue (feelings of being very tired or exhausted). Follow-up questions on the degree of difficulty, use of assistive devices, and functioning with assistance were included for most domains. More information on the international project and the questions used in this supplement can be found on the NCHS website at:

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/washington_group.htm.

Approximately one half of all sample adults (n = 16,939) were randomly selected to receive the 2015 AFD supplement. However, some persons did not complete the section. Persons who did not give responses to any of the questions in the section were given a coded value of "1" on the record completion status variable in the data file (variable RCS_AFD), which indicates that their record only contains responses of "not ascertained." These persons are retained in the file, but they are coded as "8" in all remaining relevant fields of the AFD file. Adults who met the criteria for completing the section were coded as either "2" (all answers were "refused" or "don't know"), "3" (all answers were "refused," "don't know," or "not ascertained"), or "4" (at least one valid answer) on RCS_AFD. In 2015, over 92% of AFD sample adults are coded "4" on RCS_AFD.

Because the AFD supplement was only administered to one half of all sample adults, different weights (WTFA_AFD) were generated for sample adults in the AFD File. In addition, a separate, stand-alone public use file was created for the AFD variables, rather than appending these variables to the 2015 Sample Adult File. Many NHIS analysts will want to produce estimates and perform comparisons within key subgroups such as age, sex, and race/ethnicity. This requires merging the AFD File with one or more NHIS data files (e.g., Sample Adult, Person, etc.). Information on merging data files can be found in Appendix IV of this document. The weight WTFA_AFD provided with the AFD File is designed to produce annual-level estimates calculated based on data included in this file.

Technical Notes

The 2015 AFD supplement is very comparable to the 2012-2014 AFD supplements in terms of the questions asked on the NHIS instruments across these survey years. However, the 2012-2015 AFD instruments contained fewer detailed follow-up questions than the 2011 AFD instrument, which in turn contained fewer detailed follow-up questions than the first supplement in 2010, the Quality of Life (QOL) supplement. Thus, analysts interested in combining years of data should read the notes in the Variable Layout Report, which provide information regarding the comparability of 2015 variables relative to variables in the 2011–2014 AFD files and in the 2010 QOL file. Users should also be aware that only one-quarter of sample adults were selected to receive the 2010 QOL and 2012 AFD supplements, whereas one-half of sample adults were selected to receive the 2011 and 2013-2015 AFD supplements.