

The National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health

J. Richard Udry, PI

References, Instruments, and Questionnaires Consulted in the Development of the Add Health In-home Adolescent Interview

Designing the Add Health instrument was an exciting and difficult process. The mission was very broad: To survey a nationally-representative sample of adolescents regarding the behaviors which affect their current and future health, and to make the data of interest and widely available to social, behavioral and medical researchers. Such a diverse set of interests created many challenges in constructing the questionnaire. The decision was made to include measures for the broadest possible array of health arenas. These included the adolescent's current mental, physical, emotional and sexual health statuses; health affecting behaviors, like exercise, seat belt use, drug, tobacco and alcohol use; family patterns of illness or disease; and measures of multiple levels of context including family interactions, peer influence, school policies, and access to community services. Because of the breadth of the questionnaire, the number of items for any one health arena was curtailed.

This document is designed to inform the researcher about the sources consulted in the construction of questionnaire items. There is no crosswalk between particular questions on other studies and specific indicators on the Add Health instrument. There are no intact scales from the literature in the questionnaire, but references to studies which guided questionnaire development are listed below. In many cases, items were provided by cofunding agencies and modified by the Add Health team. It should be recalled that the survey instrument and its components were extensively pilot tested. Questions were revised as necessary in response to pilot test results.

Add Health researchers can use a variety of methods to validate items when designing their analyses. Suggested approaches that researchers can take include determining the alpha reliability of summed scales; using confirmatory or exploratory factor analysis; testing different measurement assumptions using structural equation models; or using a split-sample design technique. Researchers are encouraged to use various assessments of reliability and validity.

For questions about this documentation, please email Add Health at addhealth@unc.edu.

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