


You are part of a study known around the world by researchers and policy makers! The work the National Longitudinal Surveys has accomplished in fifty years stands as a model to researchers in the U.S. and in other countries looking to create there own longitudinal studies.

Since its inception in the 1960s, the NLS has gathered information at multiple points in time on labor market experiences and significant life events of seven cohorts of men, women and children. While labor market experiences have always been a core focus of the NLS, the studies cover schooling, training, skills, income and assets, family formation, fertility, household formation, attitudes and expectations, and much more.

For more information about the historical importance of the NLS read the recent comments from U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Commissioner Erica L. Groshen as she talks about the importance of the National Longitudinal Surveys.





Spring 2016

NLSY79
Young Adult

Update

Recent NLSY Research Results

Information gathered from the NLS is routinely used by researchers who write papers on varying topics. The list below is just a sampling of some of the pieces written in the last couple of years. For a complete list of known articles using the NLS, visit the NLS Bibliography web site at www.nlsbibliography.org.

[Job Displacement among Single Mothers: Effects on Children’s Outcomes in Young Adulthood](#)
Jennie Brand and Juli Thomas
American Journal of Sociology 119,4 (January 2014): 955-1001

[Childhood Socialization and Political Attitudes: Evidence from a Natural Experiment](#)
Andrew Healy and Neil Malhotra
Journal of Politics 75,4 (October 2013): 1023–1037

[Violence in Early Life: A Canada-US Comparison](#)
Lihui Zhang
Child Indicators Research 8,2 (June 2015): 299-346

[Predictors of Latent Growth in Sexual Risk Taking in Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood](#)
Kristin Moilanen
Journal of Sex Research 52,1 (2015): 83-97

[An Evaluation of Fruit and Vegetable Consumption and Cigarette Smoking Among Youth](#)
Jeffrey Haibach, Gregory Homish, Lorraine Collins, Christine Ambrosone, and Gary Giovino
Nicotine and Tobacco Research 17,6 (June 2015): 719-726

[Low Birth-Weight and Risk for Major Depression: A Community-based Longitudinal Study](#)
Stephen Levine
Psychiatry Research 215,3 (30 March 2014): 618-623



Visit the NLSY79 website at nlsy79.norc.org

Don’t forget, participating in the NLSY79 is another great way for you to make a positive impact on so many people’s lives!

☐ My name, address, or phone number has changed
Please check

☐ Are you moving? When and where? _____

Name	E-mail
Address	Comments/Questions
City/State/Zip	
()	
Phone/Cell Number	

Please Complete the Card at Left

**Have You Moved?
Have You Changed Your Name?
Do You Have Feedback or Questions for Us?**

Please complete the postage-paid card at left, marking any name, address, or phone number corrections above the mailing label. Then, drop the card in the mail to the Center for Human Resource Research (CHRR) at the Ohio State University. Or you can go to the NLSY79 website at nlsy79.norc.org to make address changes.

CHRR and NORC at The University of Chicago manage the survey and conduct the interviews under a contract with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor.

Learn Why the NLS Counts

As Explained by U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Commissioner Erica L. Groshen

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics is best known for our monthly job and inflation reports. We also publish data on many other topics, ranging from how Americans spend their time and money to workplace injuries and the growth of entrepreneurship.

The National Longitudinal Surveys stand out because they are designed to answer key long-term questions about people’s paths through life. Most of our measures about the labor market and economy focus on current conditions. What’s the national unemployment rate? How rapidly is employment growing in California or North Dakota or Georgia? How many job openings are there in manufacturing? What are the trends in consumer prices for food, energy, clothing, and shelter? It’s important to have up-to-date answers for these and other economic questions. But some questions take longer to answer—years or even decades.

Some long-term questions we care about include: How many jobs do people hold over their lifetimes? How do earnings grow at different stages of workers’ careers? The surveys designed to answer these and other long-term questions are called “longitudinal” surveys. What’s that mean?

A longitudinal survey asks questions about the same people at different points in their lives. Longitudinal surveys are useful for studying changes that occur over long periods. These surveys are also useful for examining cause-and-effect relationships. For example, how do events that happened when a person was in high school affect labor market success as an adult? This week we published a new report that looks at the experiences of baby boomers from age 18 to age 48.

The NLSY79 follows a set of people born in the latter years of the post-World War II baby boom, 1957 to 1964, and living in the United

States when the survey began in 1979. To answer my earlier questions—using just-released data—these baby boomers held an average of 11.7 jobs from age 18 to age 48. Their inflation-adjusted hourly earnings grew the most during their late teens and early twenties, and earnings generally grew faster

for college graduates than for people with less education.

The survey doesn’t just ask about labor market activity. It also asks about education, training, health, marriages and other relationships, children, use of government programs, juvenile crimes and arrests, drug and alcohol use, and much more. Why do we ask about these topics, some of which are pretty sensitive? In short, we’re trying to understand all the things that affect or are affected by labor market activity. That covers nearly every part of our lives.

Before this survey of baby boomers began in 1979, four other longitudinal surveys began in the 1960s of earlier generations. BLS began another survey in 1997 that represents people born in the years 1980 to 1984 and living in the United States at the start of the survey. We only still conduct the surveys of the two more

recent generations, but we have learned so much from all the surveys. These surveys are some of the most analyzed in the social sciences.

Although we learn a lot each time we update our monthly and quarterly data on employment, compensation, prices, and productivity, there is so much we could not learn without these longitudinal surveys.

This is all possible thanks to former BLS Commissioner Janet Norwood who passed away recently—and to the people who have agreed to participate in the surveys for so long—so that we can understand people’s paths over time!

Researchers in economics, sociology, psychology, education, and health sciences have used the surveys to examine a broad range of topics. Here are just a few examples of what researchers have learned from the surveys:

- Nobel Prize winner James Heckman and his colleagues found that noncognitive skills, such as motivation and perseverance, are as important to future labor market success as are skills such as reading and math.
- People who obtain a GED or other exam-certified high school equivalent have labor market outcomes that are similar to those of high school dropouts, rather than to people who earn a regular high school diploma.
- The labor market effects of a 4-year college degree are similar for those who start at a 4-year college and those who transfer from a 2-year college to a 4-year college.
- Obesity is not only a health concern, but a labor market concern. Workers pay a price for obesity with lower wages and employment, and this price is higher for women than men.
- Low birth weight is a better predictor than cognitive test scores of whether people either work or attend school at ages 24 to 27. Birth weight also is a better predictor of adult wages.

