The National Health Interview Survey: Celebrating 50 years of success

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Happy 50th Anniversary, NHIS!

The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS)

is celebrating the 50th anniversary

of the National Health Interview Survey (NHIS)

in 2007

- NHIS created by 1956 National Health Survey Act, Public Law 652, signed by President Eisenhower.
- Went into the field first time: July 1957.
- Represents noninstitutionalized civilian U.S. population.
- In-person survey.
- In the field almost continuously.
- Paper & pencil until 1997; then CAPI.

- Present core topics:

    Health status

    Use of health care services

    Health insurance coverage

    Health-related behaviors

        (e.g., tobacco & alcohol use)

    Risk factors

    Demographic & socio-economic info.

    Etc.

- Supplements on special topics each year.

Main core components:

Family questionnaire

Sample Child Questionnaire

Sample Adult Questionnaire

Access to microdata & analytic results

MICRODATA

- Free on NCHS Website
- One year's worth of microdata released < 6 months after end of data year

ANALYTIC RESULTS

- NCHS pubs free on NCHS Website
- Early Release Program reports on Website only
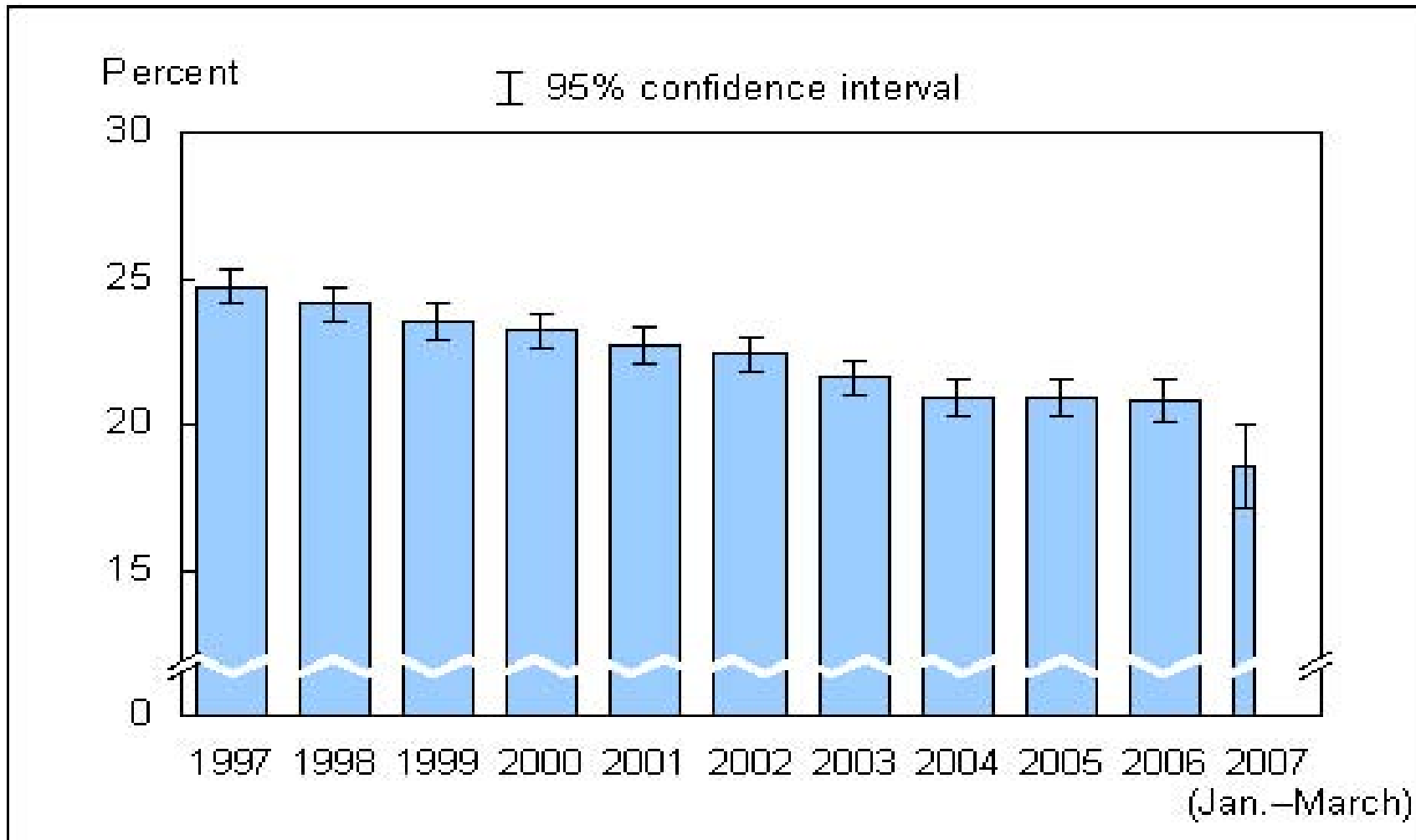
Quarterly Early Release (ER) reports

1. Estimates for 15 key health indicators
2. Detailed estimates on health insurance coverage

EXAMPLE: 2006 NHIS

ER updated to use data from	Released
Jan-March 2006	Sept 2006
Jan-June 2006	Dec 2006
Jan-Sept 2006	Jan 2006
Jan-Dec 2006	June 2006 (~same time as 2006 microdata)

From Sept 2007 Early Release:
Prevalence of current smoking among adults aged 18+, 1997 to Quarter 1, 2007

Selected milestones in the history of the NHIS: 1957-2007

57/58: First went into the field in July 57

62/63: New sample design, using info from 1960 Census

62/63: First microdata files created and permanently retained

66/67: Largest sample (139,196 persons)

73: New sample design, using new info from 1970 Census

76: First identification of multiple races

85: New sample design, using new info from 1980 Census

85: First oversampling of blacks

86: Smallest sample (62,052 persons)

95: New sample design, using new info from 1990 Census

95: First oversampling of Hispanics

97: New questionnaire & first use of CAPI

01: Early Release (ER) Program began

01: First release of public use microdata files on Internet

04: Blaise software in laptops

04: Contact History Instrument used (CHI) to record characteristics of interviewers' attempts to contact household occupants

04: First annual microdata files to be released < 1 year after end of survey year

06: New sample design, using new info from 2000 Census

06: First oversampling of Asians

06: First oversampling of certain persons aged ≥65

06: First annual microdata files to be released < 6 months after end of survey year

07: Revamped income and Social Security number questions

07: First survey to release microdata file of paradata

A few historical tidbits

How the NHIS used to determine:

- RACE

- USUAL ACTIVITY, PAST 12 MONTHS

- HOW A MOTOR VEHICLE ACCIDENT HAPPENED

- WORK LOSS DUE TO MEDICAL CONDITION

- FAMILY INCOME

Interviewer-observed race, 1957+

From the 1967 Interviewers' manual:

a. Race and sex

As a rule, do not ask about race and sex but simply mark the proper Fosdic circles while you are asking about the person's age.

Unless you learn otherwise, assume that the race of all persons related to the respondent is the same as the race of the respondent.

(1) Nonwhite races

Report Mexicans as white, unless they are definitely Indian or other nonwhite race. Report Negroes and persons of mixed Negro and other parentage as Negro. Report American Indians and all races other than white or Negro as "other."

Hispanic ethnicity categories today

You may choose more than one.

1. Puerto Rican

2. Cuban/Cuban American

3. Dominican (Republic)

4. Mexican

5. Mexican American

6. Central or South American

7. Other Latin American

8. 8. Other Hispanic/Latino

Race categories today

You may choose more than one.
1. White
2. Black/African American
3. Indian (American)
4. Alaska Native
5. Native Hawaiian
6. Guamanian
7. Samoan
8. Other Pacific Islander
9. Asian Indian
10. Chinese
11. Filipino
12. Japanese
13. Korean
14. Vietnamese
15. Other Asian

Respondent's usual activity, as asked in 1957-81

For persons aged 17+

What were you doing most of the past 12 months –

[For males:] *working or doing something else?*

[For females:] *keeping house, working or doing anything else?*

Nature of accident, 1959/60

Section A - (Motor Vehicle Accidents)

If "Outside" in q. 4, ask:

5. (a) How did the accident happen?

1. ☐ Accident between motor vehicle and person riding on bicycle, in streetcar, on railroad train, on horse-drawn vehicle

2. ☐ Accident between motor vehicle and person who was walking, running, or standing

3. ☐ Other (Specify how the accident happened)

Work loss due to medical condition, as asked in 1960/61

If 17 years or over ask:

LAST WEEK or the WEEK BEFORE

How many days did … keep you from work?

(For females add)

not counting work around the house?

Family income:
Response categories, 1962/63

Group 1. Under $500 (Including loss)

Group 2. $500 - $999

Group 3. $1,000 - $1,999
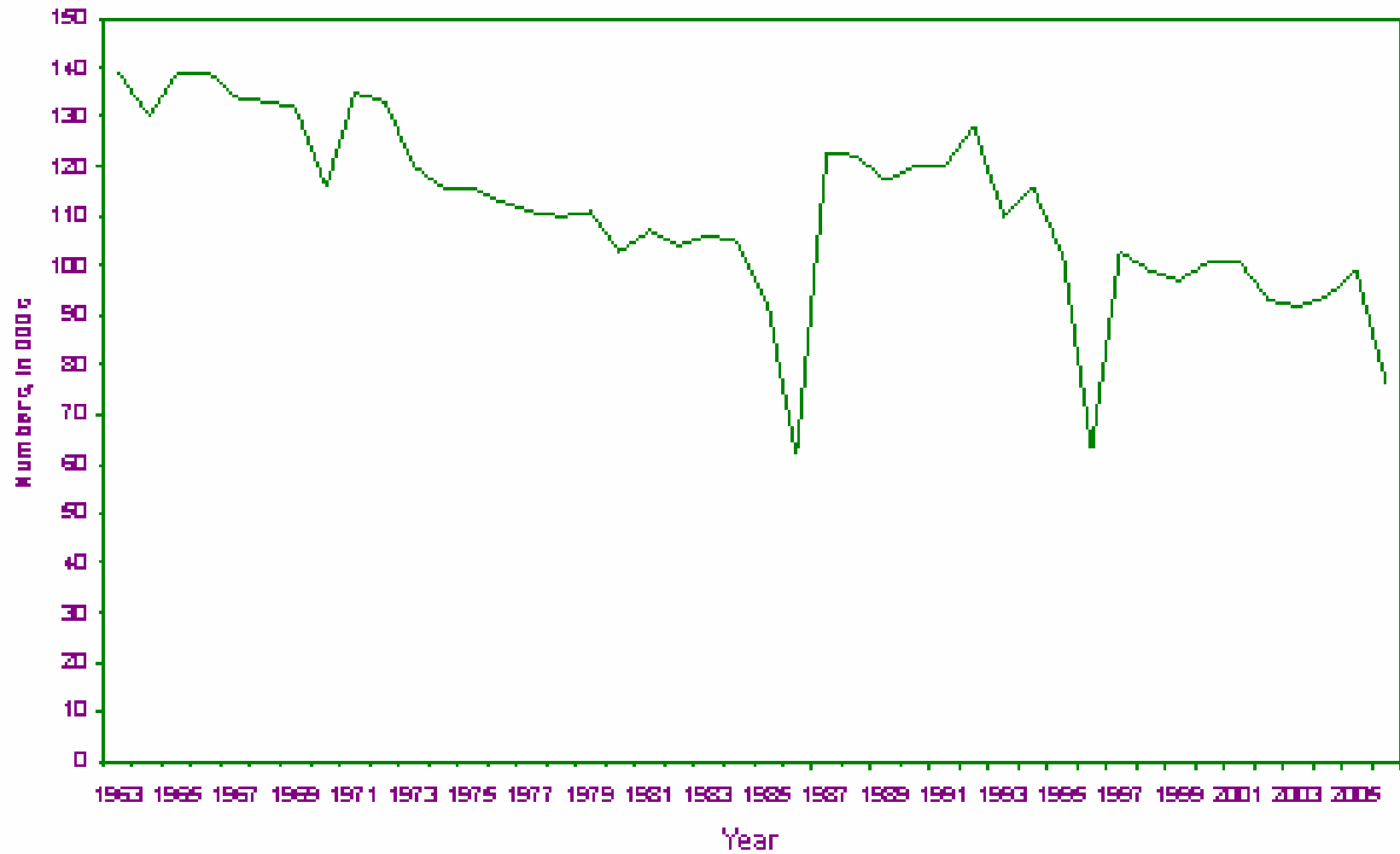
Group 4. $2,000 - $2,999

Group 5. $3,000 - $3,999

Group 6. $4,000 - $4,999

Group 7. $5,000 - $6,999

Group 8. $7,000 - $9,999

Group 9. $10,000 and over

Number of persons in NHIS samples, 1963-2006

Number, in 000s

Year

NHIS Website:
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhis.htm

National Health Interview Survey

Celebrating the first 50 years
1957–2007