

## FACTS about...

### The Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS)

#### Background

The **Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS)** was developed by the Health Communication and Informatics Research Branch of the Division of Cancer Control and Population Sciences as an outcome of the National Cancer Institute's Extraordinary Opportunity in Cancer Communications. The National Cancer Institute fielded the first HINTS in 2002 and 2003, surveying 6,369 Americans. Subsequent surveys followed in 2005 (5,586 Americans surveyed) and 2007–2008 (7,674 Americans surveyed).

#### Purpose

HINTS was created to monitor changes in the rapidly evolving field of health communication. The survey data can be used to understand how adults use different communication channels to obtain health information for themselves and their loved ones, and to create more effective health communication strategies across populations.

#### Resources

- Hints data are available for public use: <http://hints.cancer.gov/>.
- HINTS 2003, 2005, and 2007 were collected in both English and Spanish.
- The HINTS Web site, <http://hints.cancer.gov>, provides access to a variety of HINTS resources, including program publications, data, supplementary materials, and an electronic codebook summarizing sample and population estimates for each HINTS item.
- A special supplement to the *Journal of Health Communication*, devoted to HINTS-related research, was published in May 2006 (*Journal of Health Communication*, 11, Suppl 1).
- A resource for data users describing analysis of trends using HINTS data was published in 2008 and can be ordered or downloaded from the Web site: Analytic methods to examine changes across years using HINTS 2003 & 2005 data.

- A report documenting trends in health and cancer communication in the 2003 and 2005 data was published in 2007 and can be ordered or downloaded from the Web site.
- A series of HINTS *Briefs* has also been developed to summarize key findings for HINTS analyses and highlight publications that have used HINTS data. Briefs are available in English and Spanish.

The following peer-reviewed publications describe the development and key outcomes of the initial HINTS survey:

Nelson DE, Kreps GL, Hesse BW, Croyle RT, Willis G, Arora NK, Rimer BK, Viswanath KV, Weinstein N, Alden S. The Health Information National Trends Survey (HINTS): development, design, and dissemination. *J Health Commun* 2004 Sep–Oct; 9(5):443–60; discussion 81–4.

Hesse BW, Nelson DE, Kreps GL, Croyle RT, Arora NK, Rimer BK, Viswanath K. Trust and sources of health information: the impact of the Internet and its implications for health care providers. *Arch Intern Med* 2005 Dec 12–26; 165(22):2618–24.

Additional publications using HINTS data are available online at <http://hints.cancer.gov/>.

#### What's New?

In 2009, the University of Puerto Rico, in collaboration with the Puerto Rico Department of Health, used a fully translated version of the 2007–2008 HINTS instrument to collect HINTS data in a representative sample of adults in Puerto Rico.

In September 2009, HINTS data users will share research using HINTS data at the third HINTS Data Users Conference in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Look for a special volume of *Health Communication* published by Hampton Press focusing on HINTS data and the emerging evidence base in health communication.

Plans are underway for HINTS to be in the field again in 2010.