

Innovative Data Collection for Better Understanding Health, Cognitive Functioning, and Mortality among Midlife Americans: An Overview of Wave VI of Add Health

Population health in the United States is among the worst of all high-income countries in the world and health disparities across sociodemographic groups are very wide. There is particular concern among midlife Americans, among whom obesity levels are as high as ever recorded and health problems and deaths due to drug and alcohol abuse, social stresses, violence, and socioeconomic inequality are an acute worry. This presentation focuses on an innovative data collection project that aims to better understand health and health disparities among the midlife U.S. population. The presentation will focus on the rationale, design, and data collection of Wave VI of the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent to Adult Health (Add Health), which is currently in the field. Building on 30 years of previous data collection among the Add Health cohort, the presentation will give close attention to the social, contextual, environmental, health, cognitive/physical functioning, biological, and mortality measures being collected in Wave VI; participants are 39-49 years old with an average age of 44. The presentation will also focus on efforts to achieve adequate response rates and will give a sneak peek into some preliminary data from the field to date. Data dissemination plans will also be discussed. The presentation will be geared to also helping scholars understand the challenges and rewards of undertaking such a large and encompassing project.