

## How Respondents Report Their Health Status:

### Cognitive Interviews of Self-Rated Health Across Race/Ethnicity, Gender, Age, and Socioeconomic Status

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AAPOR 2015

1

## Self-Rated Health (SRH)

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- Global rating of health status
  - *“Would you say your health in general is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?”*
- Widely used to study health
- What underlies these ratings?
- SRH is a perception of one’s health that includes
  - Health factors considered
  - Frameworks used to evaluate health
    - How health factors and components of the question are experienced, conceptualized, interpreted, and integrated

2

## How Respondents Rate Their Health

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- Prior research focuses on *which* health factors respondents consider
- Less known about *how* respondents take these health factors into account—the frameworks used to answer
- Also unclear how health factors and frameworks vary across social groups

3

## Research Aims

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- Mixed-methods analysis of cognitive interviews
- Describe the processes respondents undertake when rating their health
  - 1) *Which* health factors respondents take into account
  - 2) *How* respondents take health factors into account
- Examine variation across social groups
  - Race/ethnicity
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Socioeconomic status (education)

4

## Data

- 64 respondents, 9 interviewers
- Madison and Milwaukee areas
- Recruited through connections with racial/ethnic community leaders and in specific locations
  - E.g., churches, community centers, pow-wows
- Quota sample crossing four dimensions
  - Race/ethnicity (black, American Indian, Latino(a), white)
  - Gender
  - Age (30-55 years vs 56 years or more)
  - Education (high school or less vs some college or more)

5

### Number of Completed Interviews by Respondent Characteristics

	Male				Female				Total
	High School or Less		Some College or More		High School or Less		Some College or More		
	30-55 years	56+ years	30-55 years	56+ years	30-55 years	56+ years	30-55 years	56+ years	
<b>Black</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
<b>American Indian</b>	1	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	16
<b>White</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
<b>Latino/a</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	16
<b>Total</b>	7	8	9	8	8	8	8	8	64

6

## Excerpt from Interviewing Protocol

**100. Would you say your health in general is excellent, very good, good, fair, or poor?**

- EXCELLENT
- VERY GOOD
- GOOD
- FAIR
- POOR
- DON'T KNOW
- REFUSED

**PROBE-1:** What were you thinking about when you answered [ANSWER] for this question.

**PROBE-1a:** What else were you thinking about?

7

## Mixed Methods Analytic Approach

- Coding process
  - Inductive and iterative qualitative approach
  - Bottom-up process of coding themes that emerge from the data
  - Revise codes as data are added
  - Grounded theory, constant comparative method
- Analysis
  - Quantification of codes
  - Unit of analysis is respondent
    - Percentage of respondents with at least one of a particular code
  - Explore differences across social groups

8

## Results

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9

## Themes

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- **Types of health factors**
- Valence of health factors
- Conditional health statements
- Time
- General health statements
- Response process statements

10

Types of Health Factors					
Factor	Percent Rs with one+ factor	Race	Sex	Age	SES
Health condition	70%				
Specific	41% <i>"I'm diabetic"</i>			+o	
Nonspecific	36% <i>"my illnesses"</i>			+o	
Absence	17% <i>"I have no medical conditions"</i>			+y	+sc
Health behavior	41% <i>"I don't exercise," "trying to lose weight"</i>				+sc
Health care	25% <i>"I went to the doctor," "I don't go"</i>		+m		
Physical state	22% <i>"in good shape" "overweight"</i>				
Comparative	19% <i>"compared to my husband"</i>	-L			
Physical functioning	14% <i>"body working," "ability to work," "lazy"</i>	+w			
Mental health	8% <i>"depression," "I don't have mental health issues"</i>			o+	
Age	6% <i>"I'm at an age..."</i>		+m		

11

## Themes

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- Types of health factors
- **Valence of health factors**
- Conditional statements
- Time
- General health statements
- Response process statements

12

## Valence

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- In psychology
  - Refers to emotions
  - Degree of attraction or aversion individual feels toward specific objects or events
  - Positive, negative, ambivalent
- Our operational definition
  - Affective orientation to the health factor based on what it implies about the quality of current health status

13

## Categories of Valence

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Category	Example
Positive	<i>"I have no illnesses"</i>
Negative	<i>"I have several illnesses"</i>
Neutral	<i>"I'm about average"</i>
Ambivalent	<i>"I only have two things that's not healthy about myself"</i>
Not discernible	<i>"how I feel about my exercise"</i>

14

## % Respondents with Valence by SRH

	Negative	Ambivalent/ Neutral	Positive	Not Discernible	N
Fair	100	17	25	25	12
Good	86	46	54	57	28
Very good	65	20	80	65	20
Excellent	50	0	100	25	4

15

## Themes

- Types of health factors
- Valence of health factors
- **Conditional health statements**
- Time
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16



## Conditional Health Statements

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- Presence of one health factor depends on another
- 64% of respondents with at least one set

17

## Conditional Health Statements

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- Cascade (34%)
  - Presence of one health factor leads to the other
  - “if I didn’t have those [health conditions], my health would be excellent”
  - Positive association with education
- Contrast (36%)
  - Presence of one health factor juxtaposed with another
  - “I do have some medical issues, but other than that, my health is really good”
  - No differences among social groups

18

## Summary

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- Provides a more complete description of what underlies respondents' ratings of their general health status
  - *Which* health factors respondents take into account
  - *How* respondents take health factors into account
    - Valence
    - Conditional health statements
    - Time
    - General health statements
    - Response process statements
  - How the health factors and frameworks used to rate health might vary across social groups

19

## Thank you!

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20