

# MALAYSIA AGEING AND RETIREMENT SURVEY (MARS)

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22 August 2023 | HRS Around the World Meeting

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# MARS Wave 1

<b>Study timeline</b>	July 2018–April 2019
<b>Coverage</b>	Peninsular and East Malaysia Aged 40 years and older, max three respondents from one household
<b>Respondents</b>	
<b>Mode of Interview</b>	Face-to-face via CAPI
<b>Total sample</b>	5,613

## Core Components of MARS Wave 1



Family support and  
living arrangement



Work, Employment and  
Retirement



Income and  
consumption, housing,  
savings, assets



Health, health-care  
utilization, health  
insurance, long-term care



Psychosocial

# MARS Wave 2

<b>Study timeline</b>	October 2020–April 2022
<b>Coverage</b>	Peninsular and East Malaysia Aged 40 years and older, max three respondents from one household
<b>Respondents</b>	
<b>Mode of interview</b>	Face-to-face or phone via CAPI
<b>Total sample</b>	4,821

## Core Components of MARS Wave 2



Family support and  
living arrangement



Work, employment and  
retirement



Income and consumption,  
housing, savings, assets,  
financial literacy



Health, health-care  
utilization, health  
insurance, long-term care



Psychosocial



Impact of COVID-19 and  
social protection

# MARS Questionnaire

Total number of questions: 260 (Sub-questions >400)

- Demographic attributes
- Household tracking
- Intergenerational exchange
- Family relationship
- Health status
- Self-reported memory
- Sleep
- Physical functioning (ADL, IADL & NAGI)
- Mental health
- Loneliness
- Vision & Hearing
- Dental health
- Frailty (Fall, pain)
- Healthcare utilization
- Future caregiver
- Employment

- Job characteristics
- Retirement
- Perception on ageing
- Assisted-living facility
- Income
- Expenditure
- Savings
- Assets
- Housing
- Financial literacy\*
- Religious behaviors
- Social network
- Covid-19\*
- Social assistance\*

\*Additional Modules for Wave-2

## Physical Measurements

- Blood pressure / pulse
- Height
- Weight
- Hip Circumference
- Waist Circumference
- Grip strength

## Cognition

- Immediate & delayed word recall
- Serial 7's subtraction test
- Backward count
- Date naming - consisting of month, day, year and day of week
- Object naming
- People naming - Prime Minister

# Issues and Challenges

## ▪ Interviewers

- ❑ High turnover rate among interviewers - quit for better and more permanent jobs, limited commitment from part-time interviewers -> shortage of interviewers in certain areas/states

## ▪ Respondents

- ❑ Difficulty in gaining trust – fear of scams and safety
- ❑ Refusals did not come from respondents but from other members of the family
- ❑ Language barrier between interviewers and respondents

## ▪ Movement restrictions

- ❑ COVID-19 pandemic - travel restriction issue, fear of physical meeting

## ▪ Low response rate

- ❑ Among specific sub-groups and communities (Example: urban Chinese, gated residential areas)

## ▪ Addresses no longer valid

- ❑ New development – e.g. shopping mall

## ▪ Remote areas with limited accessibility

- ❑ Limited access to some of the remote areas, especially in East Malaysia

## ▪ Representativeness of the population

- ❑ Under representation of certain subgroups (e.g. Chinese ethnic group)

# Strategies to Increase Survey Response Rate

Monetary incentive

Understanding and  
reducing respondents'  
burden

Handling sensitive  
questions/privacy issues

Build trust

Identifying enumerators  
of the targeted group  
(Language, gender,  
ethnic and locality)

Pre-notification letters

Work through local  
authorities

Universiti Malaya as the  
parent organization

Assurance of  
confidentiality

# Several remedial measures

- **Fieldwork planning**
  - » Interviewers travel in teams of 3-5 people working for 3-7 days, particularly in the very remote areas
  - » Matching interviewers to respondents in terms of background such as ethnicity, language/dialect and religion.
  - » Promotion of MARS project through various local media.
  - » Establishing network with local community leaders to increase cooperation from respondents.
- **Real-time fieldwork monitoring**
  - » To ensure interviewers are compliant with the interview protocols
- **Continuous recruitment of interviewers**
  - » Continuous recruitment and training of interviewers to address the high turnover rate.
- **Phone interviews during the movement restrictions**
  - » Phone interviews were carried out followed by physical measurements on site once restrictions were lifted.
- **Use of weights**
  - » Weights were calculated to cater for under/over representation of certain subgroups.

# Profile of respondents

	Wave 1		Wave 2	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
<b>Gender</b>				
Male	2,494	<b>44.4</b>	2,123	<b>44.0</b>
Female	3,119	<b>55.6</b>	2,698	<b>56.0</b>
<b>Age</b>				
40–49	1,500	<b>26.7</b>	1,118	<b>23.2</b>
50–59	1,827	<b>32.5</b>	1,566	<b>32.5</b>
60–69	1,476	<b>26.3</b>	1,400	<b>29.0</b>
70–79	636	<b>11.3</b>	580	<b>12.0</b>
80+	174	<b>3.1</b>	157	<b>3.3</b>
<b>Education</b>				
No schooling	776	<b>13.8</b>	565	<b>11.7</b>
Primary school	1,715	<b>30.6</b>	1,432	<b>29.7</b>
Lower secondary	1,216	<b>21.7</b>	1,077	<b>22.3</b>
Upper secondary	1,341	<b>23.9</b>	1,252	<b>26.0</b>
Postsecondary/Tertiary	564	<b>10.0</b>	495	<b>10.3</b>
<b>Place of Residence</b>				
Urban	3,455	<b>61.6</b>	3,076	<b>63.8</b>
Rural	2,158	<b>38.4</b>	1,745	<b>36.2</b>
<b>Marital Status</b>				
Never married	224	<b>4.0</b>	194	<b>4.0</b>
Married	4,353	<b>77.6</b>	3,732	<b>77.4</b>
Widowed	840	<b>15.0</b>	747	<b>15.5</b>
Divorced/Separated	195	<b>3.5</b>	148	<b>3.1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,613</b>		<b>4,821</b>	



# Harmonized MARS

Harmonized MARS was built using MARS Wave 1

**Section A:** Demographics and identifiers

**Section B:** Health

**Section C:** Health care utilization and insurance

**Section D:** Cognition

**Section E:** Financial and housing health

**Section F:** Income and consumption

**Section G:** Family structure

**Section H:** Employment history

**Section I:** Retirement and expectations

**Section J:** Pension

**Section K:** Physical measures

**Section L:** Assistance and caregiving

**Section M:** Stress

**Section Q:** Psychosocial

# Thank You

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