

# **Collecting Life History Information in ELSA**

## **plans for a revised life history module**

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# Recap of the LHQ 2007

- Face-to-face interview plus paper self-completion questionnaire
- Information collected about:
  - Children, partnerships, residences, work, and health histories
  - Stressful events from both childhood and adulthood
- Computerised event history calendar used as a recall aid
- Interview length of about 50 minutes
- Response rate of about 85% (7,049 achieved interviews with core members)

# Use of LHQ 2007

- Premature mortality risk (de Souza et al, *Sci Rep*)
- Depressive symptoms (Taylor et al, *Mol Psychiatry*)
- Personality and depression (Li et al, *J Affect Dis*)
- Inflammatory markers (Iob et al, *Mol Psychiatry*)
- Cognitive function (Lowry et al, *Soc Psychiat Psych Epidemiol*)
- Memory impairment (Ford et al, *J Gerontol B*)
- Hair cortisol concentration (Demakakos et al, *PNEC*)
- Risk of hysterectomy (Demakakos et al, *Br J Obs Gyn*)

# Plans for the revised LHQ 2023-2024

- Interview study members who joined ELSA after 2007
  - Around 4,000 participants (44% of cohort), 75% aged 50-70 years
- Use mixed-mode sequential design involving web and telephone
- Collect information about:
  - Children, partnerships, residences, work, and health histories
  - Early educational experiences
  - Social support and relationships in childhood and early adulthood
  - Provision of care
  - Stressful events from both childhood and adulthood
- Use computerised event history calendar as a recall aid (if feasible)
- Interview length of about 60 minutes

# Questionnaire content

- Repeat measures collected in LHQ 2007
  - Children and partnerships, residences and work, health, and difficult events over the life course
- Minor revisions and cuts to LHQ 2007 content to ensure questions are relevant for new cohorts
- New measures in LHQ 2023-24
  - Adapted from HRS, SHARE, PSID, NCDS, and other prominent studies
  - Associated with cognitive function, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias in recent studies

# New questions on:

- Parental history (country of origin) and family health in childhood
- Health behaviours (exercise, age at first alcohol and drug use, counselling)
- Early educational experiences (preschool, parental engagement, self-rated abilities, learning difficulties, extracurricular activities)
- Cognitively stimulating activities in early adulthood (work complexity\*, cultural and community engagement)
- Social support and relationships in childhood and adulthood (family, friends, religion, counselling)
- Provision of care over the life course
- Stressful events from childhood and adulthood (experience of discrimination in several domains: housing, work, education, healthcare, and interaction with police; intimate partner physical violence, childlessness, childhood bullying)

# Event history calendar (EHC)

- It is unclear whether the calendar designed for LHQ 2007 can be reused
- The pre-test of the LHQ 2007 calendar suggested that it helped recall of events and their timing (Pascale & McGee 2007)
- Other longitudinal studies have suggested web-based data quality may be equivalent with data collected via standard question-based approaches (e.g. BCS70)
- EHCs only used in a few web or mixed-mode design studies to date (e.g. NCDS, Next Steps, PSID)
- Training on the functionality of the EHC crucial for easing navigation through the event history sections in the absence of an interviewer (e.g. [How to use the Event History Calendar for Next Steps Participants – YouTube](#))