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## **Los Angeles County Health Survey (LACHS)**

### **General Description**

“The Los Angeles County Health Survey is a population based telephone survey that provides information concerning the health of Los Angeles County residents. The data are used for assessing health-related needs of the population, for program planning and policy development, and for program evaluation. The relatively large sample size allows users to obtain health indicator data for large demographic subgroups and across geographic regions of the County, including Service Planning Areas (SPAs) and Health Districts.”<sup>1</sup>

### **Background**

“Ongoing assessment of the health status of the population is a core function of local health departments, and improving the availability of high quality health information remains a major priority for the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH). The Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology (OHAE) within LACDPH is charged with carrying out this assessment function by collecting and disseminating population-based health information to plan, evaluate, and develop policy, and to serve local communities and agencies engaged in improving the health status of LA County residents.

The Los Angeles County Health Survey functions as a primary vehicle for gathering information about access to health care, health care utilization, health behaviors, health status, and knowledge and perceptions of health-related issues among the LA County population. The survey provides updates on key health indicators and to identify emerging public health issues among adults and children residing in the County's eight service planning areas (SPAs) and 26 health districts. More importantly, the survey allows the LACDPH to track health issues over time. To properly address the root causes of poor health, the survey looks beyond risk factors for individual diseases to factors in the physical and social environment that influence health, such as land use, safety, poverty, and educational attainment.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Data Collection**

LACHS is a telephone survey focused on households. Households are defined as “all houses, apartments, and mobile homes occupied by individuals, families, multiple families or extended families or occupied by multiple unrelated persons with access to a residential (landline) telephone.”<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/hasurveyintro.htm>

<sup>2</sup> <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/LACHSBackMeth2011.htm>

<sup>3</sup> [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/docs/2007%20LACHS/2007%20LA%20Health%20Survey%20Methods%20\(amended\).pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/docs/2007%20LACHS/2007%20LA%20Health%20Survey%20Methods%20(amended).pdf)

Starting in 2011, cellular telephone calls were made in addition to calls to landlines. This enabled the researchers to reach households that only use cell phones.<sup>4</sup>

“Declining response rates are not just a problem for the LACHS, but for all telephone surveys conducted by the leading survey research organizations in the U.S. in recent years. In Los Angeles County, telephone surveys are particularly difficult to execute. While (it is understood) that lower response rates are not ideal, (it is) believe(d) that the new survey procedures employed in the implementation of the 2011 LACHS have yielded accurate and reliable data for both the Adult Survey and the Child Survey.”<sup>2</sup> LACHS data have been collected since 1999. Data are available for the years 1999-2000, 2002-2003, 2005, 2007, and 2011.

### **Data Coverage**

The survey samples households from all of Los Angeles County.

### **Accessibility**

A formal research agreement with the Office of Health Assessment and Epidemiology must be made. Guidelines for this research collaboration can be found through the following link:

[http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/docs/Guidelines\\_for\\_Accessing\\_LACHS\\_dataset.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/docs/Guidelines_for_Accessing_LACHS_dataset.pdf)

Queried, aggregated LACHS data for the years 2005 and 2007 are available through the [L.A.HealthNow!](#) query system.

### **Data Link**

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/hasurveyintro.htm>

### **Funding**

Since the inception of this project, funding sources have varied greatly. The most recent year (2011) of data collection was commissioned by the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health. “Funding for the survey was provided by grants from First 5 LA, the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health, and the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health's Tobacco Control and Prevention Program, Emergency Preparedness and Response Program, Substance Abuse Prevention and Control, and Environmental Health.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Contact**

Gigi Mathew, DrPH

Research Analyst

[gmathew@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:gmathew@ph.lacounty.gov)

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<sup>4</sup> [http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/docs/2011LACHS/LACHS\\_MethodologyFs.pdf](http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/ha/docs/2011LACHS/LACHS_MethodologyFs.pdf)