



# THE DATA HARMONIZATION PROJECT

Jeff A. Jones, Ph.D., Keeneland Conference 2010



# Background

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- HMOs , hospitals, and private health care have used data for years to test inputs and measure outcomes
- Can similar studies address public health?

# The Profiles



- ASTHO: Association of State & Territorial Health Officials (DC)
- NACCHO: National Association of City & County Health Officials (DC)
- NALBOH: National Association of Local Boards of Health (Bowling Green, OH)

# Funded By:



- The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (Princeton, NJ) –Data Harmonization
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Profiles (ASTHO and NACCHO)



# Some Elements to Data Harmonization

# The Survey Instruments



- A. Do the surveys ask about similar subjects/domains?
- B. Are specific questions identical or nearly identical?

# Geography Is the Key...Literally



- Do agencies conform to the same geographic jurisdiction?
  - Example: What is the population of Lexington?
    - a) = people living within the Urban Service Boundary
    - b) = people living in Fayette County
    - c) = people living in the Lexington MSA (Metropolitan Statistical Area)

# Demographics



- Should conform to the OMB (Office of Management & Budget) regulations governing the US Census

# The Methodologies



- A. Are the surveys administered at or near the same time periods?
  
- B. Are the surveys administered through a similar format (paper? Internet? phone?) and methodology (follow-up protocols, etc.)?

# The Collaboration



- Forming
- Norming
- Storming
- Performing

Bruce Tuckman (1965)



# The Data Harmonization Project

Outcomes and the Future

# Shared Methodologies



- Gathered in sequence through 2010
  - ASTHO: April – June
  - NACCHO: Summer
  - NALBOH: Fall
  
- Use of a single vendor (PCE) for 3 web-based instruments

# Data Harmonization Outcome: Part A



Each of the three Profiles surveys are using the same Geographic and Demographic questions (what we are calling Part A)

# Data Harmonization Outcome: Part B



Each of the three Profiles surveys, however, focus on different topics. Each survey has a distinct, different Part B with questions of interest for each organization.

Even in these individualized Part Bs, however, there has been a concerted effort to align questions on similar topics by using shared or parallel language in the questions.

Knowing what the other surveys are gathering, associations have been able to shorten their surveys somewhat.

# Data Harmonization Outcome: Part C



Each of the three Profiles surveys are using the similar cross-thematic questions addressing key areas of focus for RWJF initiatives (what we are calling Part C)

# Teamwork



- Interactive colleagues in parallel positions at all three associations
- Profiles Work Groups at all three associations
- ASTHO and NACCHO gathering information on local boards of health to assist NALBOH

Thank You \* Merci \* Gracias \* Xiexie \* Tack \* Shukran \* Dhanyavaad \* Spasiba \*  
Qa Tlho' \* Nemaio \* Hanta



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