Friends Forever?

Measuring Changes in Personal Social Networks

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Personal Social Networks

- Personal social networks are important in people’s lives
  - modify the effects of stressors on health and wellbeing
  - are important factors for personal decisions
  - at different points in life and under differing circumstances social networks shape the paths to key outcomes in the lives of persons
- Not easy to measure
- Various ways to measure social networks in surveys, e.g.
  - Role approach (SHARE wave 1 & wave 2)
  - Name generator approach (SHARE wave 4 & wave 6)
Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe

- Multidisciplinary, cross-national panel study
- Social, economic and health situation
- Target group 50+ population
- Face to face CAPI
- First wave in 2004 with 11 countries
  7th wave is now in the field with 28 countries
- 6 waves released
  (297,000 Interviews, 120,000 individuals)
- Life histories, end of life interviews, objective health measures, interviews in nursing homes, interviewer survey…
- easySHARE (training data set)
Name Generator Approach

- Ask respondents to **name** persons that are important for them directly
  - Up to seven network members
  - Follow up questions on SN members & relationship characteristics
  - Overall satisfaction with network (or not having a network)

- Network persons are linked with other questionnaire modules, eg. children module, social support, financial transfers (=> very complex routing)
Now I am going to ask some questions about your relationships with other people. Most people discuss with others the good or bad things that happen to them, problems they are having, or important concerns they may have. Looking back over the last 12 months, who are the people with whom you most often discussed important things? These people may include your family members, friends, neighbors, or other acquaintances. Please refer to these people by their first names.
Please give me the first name of the person with whom you MOST OFTEN discuss things that are important to you:

**IWER:**
if R cannot name any network member, type 991
What is Federico's relationship to you?

IWER:
Prompt if needed: so this person is your...

- 1. Spouse/Partner
- 2. Mother
- 3. Father
- 4. Mother-in-law
- 5. Father-in-law
- 6. Stepmother
- 7. Stepfather
- 8. Brother
- 9. Sister
- 10. Child
- 11. Step-child/your current partner's child
- 12. Son-in-law
- 14. Grandchild
- 15. Grandparent
- 16. Aunt
- 17. Uncle
- 18. Niece
- 19. Nephew
- 20. Other relative
- 21. Friend
- 22. (Ex-)colleague/co-worker
- 23. Neighbour
- 24. Ex-spouse/partner
- 25. Minister, priest, or other clergy
- 26. Therapist or other professional helper
- 27. Housekeeper/Home health care provider
- 96. None of these
Baseline SN Module

Follow-up Questions
- Geographical Proximity
- Frequency of Contact
- Emotional Closeness
- Overall Satisfaction with Network
Which family member from outside the household, friend or neighbour have you helped most often in the last twelve months?

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Forwarded SN Info follow up question
Going Longitudinal

- Preload information from previous social network (if respondent allows us to do so):
  - first names of SN members
  - relation to respondent
  - month and year of last SN interview
- Baseline assessment of actual social network
  - including follow up questions
- Compare both networks
  - link SN members between waves
  - ask for reason if SN member “got lost”
The Longitudinal Dimension

Wave 4 (preloaded)
- Maria (sister)
- Pascal (son)
- Clara (daughter)

Wave 6
- Clara mentioned again?
- Reason why Maria is not mentioned again?
- "lost" member

Follow-up Questions (both waves)
- Geographical Proximity
- Frequency of Contact
- Emotional Closeness
- Overall Satisfaction with Network

Additional Follow-up Questions added in w6:
- Year of birth
- Employment Status
- Relationship Status

New member
- Thomas (friend)
Linkage of SN members

- CAPI instrument displays both lists of networks members
- Interviewer goes through the list of preloaded ‘old’ SN members asking if they have been mentioned again this time
- Name of w6 network member disappears from the screen if chosen
Linkage of SN members

As you may remember, when we interviewed you in April 2011, you also mentioned some people that were important to you at that time. Now we would like to compare those persons to the ones you just mentioned today to find out who you mentioned again and who not.

Last time you mentioned PINA (Sister). Did you mention him/her again today?

**IF RESPONDENT CONFIRMS THAT PINA WAS MENTIONED TODAY**, check FIRST list below for PINA and enter the corresponding number.
If PINA was not mentioned today, enter 96 (Person not mentioned again this time).

Persons mentioned this time:

- 1. Federico (Friend)
- 2. Gaetano (a child)
- 3. Nucio (Friend)
- 4. Alfonso (Neighbour)
- 96. Person not mentioned again this time
“Lost” SN Members

If a network person was not mentioned again we ask:

What is the main reason you didn't mention Maria this time?

1. I forgot, Maria should have been included
2. I moved
3. Maria moved
4. Maria died
5. I became ill or had a health problem
6. Maria became ill or had a health problem
7. Respondent does not recognize the named person
8. We are no longer close
9. Wrong, Maria WAS mentioned this time
97. Other reason (specify)
What do we get?

- We do not only see overall network changes like:
  - Size of social network
  - Network composition
  - Quality of relations
  - Support given to or provided by network members
  - etc

- But also individual changes within the network composition as well as reasons for changes
Questions?

Thank You!
Pass by at our booth