

Multi-Stage Development of the SHARE questionnaire

The first stage of the SHARE development process started in January 2002, when the SHARE working groups produced an English-language draft questionnaire, starting primarily from the role models of the U.S. Health and Retirement Study (HRS; Juster & Suzman 1995) and the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA; Marmot et al. 2003). This draft questionnaire was piloted in the UK in September 2002 with the help of the National Centre for Social Research (NatCen, London). Based on the lessons from this pilot, the English-language questionnaire was thoroughly revised and translated into all SHARE languages. The second stage culminated in a first all-country pilot which applied the survey instrument simultaneously in all SHARE countries, using quota samples of some 75 individuals in each country (June 2003). For this pilot as well as for the subsequent pre-tests and the main survey, the Survey Research Center (SRC) of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor developed an intense standardized train-the-trainer programme for survey agency representatives (see Alcsér & Benson, 2005, for details). In the third stage, after further refinements of the instrument, the full questionnaire was pre-tested in January/February 2004 using genuine probability samples (some 100 primary respondents per country plus their spouses). This all-country pre-test also tested the country-specific logistics and the procedures to achieve probability samples. During the fourth stage, an extensive analysis of the pilot and pre-test results was conducted, which led to the final design of the instrument (see Börsch-Supan & Jürges, 2005: Appendix B, for the main questionnaire).