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Protocol of the survey at one year

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One year after inclusion of the newborns in maternity units, an in-depth survey was conducted on the parents of the Elfe cohort children. The protocol was practically identical to that of the national survey conducted when the infants were two months old.

The main aims of this survey were to document the first changes in the families' sociodemographic characteristics, to record any residential changes and the reasons for them, and to collect additional data on the children's health, diet, care arrangements and psychomotor development. It also provided a means to learn more about the families through questions on their values, child-rearing practices and cultural activities.

The survey at one year was approved by the CCTIRS and authorized by the French data protection authority (CNIL) (authorization no. 911535). Its public interest and statistical quality were certified by the CNIS certification committee (Comité du Label) (visa 2012X722AU).

1 Study population

The survey included all families who had given their consent at the maternity unit and who had not formally withdrawn their consent by directly informing the Elfe research unit, **whether or not they had taken part in the survey at two months**. Both parents were interviewed, whether they lived together with the child or were separated.

2 Survey waves and number of families to be contacted

Four survey waves corresponding to the four waves of the maternity unit survey took place shortly after the children's first birthdays. The same protocol was applied for each one.

- Wave 1: 11 May 2012 to 7 August 2012
2,690 families to be contacted
- Wave 2: 29 June to 2012 to 6 October 2012
4,462 families to be contacted
- Wave 3: 28 September 2012 to 29 December 2012
5,038 families to be contacted
- Wave 4: 28 November 2012 to 8 March 2013
5,518 families to be contacted

Total survey duration: 9.5 months
Number of families to be contacted: 17,708

3 Survey implementation

Following a call for tenders in 2010, the GFK polling company was selected to conduct the surveys at two months, one year and two years. It was thus GFK which conducted this second phone survey (CATI) on each of the children's parents. Like the survey at two months, it was based on two main questionnaire categories: a mother's questionnaire and a so-called father's questionnaire. ¹

¹The father's questionnaire is "so-called" as the mother's current partner was also interviewed if he lived with the mother and child.

3.1 Protocol for contacting the parents

It is strictly identical to that of the survey at two months.

An initial letter announcing the survey was sent to the families by the Elfe team around two weeks before the survey began (letter approved by the Comité du Label de la Statistique Publique).

Initial contact with the families was made through the mother who, except in a few cases (see below), was also interviewed first (even if the father was the reference parent in the survey at two months).

After checking the phone numbers corresponding to the addresses recorded during the survey at two months (or in the maternity unit for families which did not take part at two months) the Elfe IT department transmitted to GFK the full contact details of all the interviewable families in the database: phone numbers (landline and mobile), email addresses, postal addresses of parents and contact persons.

Last, three days before the start of the survey, all the mothers for whom Elfe had an email address received an email informing them that they would shortly be contacted by an interviewer.

During the survey wave, in cases where the father, mother or contact person could not be reached, GFK implemented specific procedures to recover addresses or telephone numbers:

- Manual search to obtain the mother's number when the number called to contact her was a Fax/Modem, an answerphone or an invalid number
- Calls to father's or contact person's numbers to obtain the mother's number
- Sending of additional email messages
- For mothers with an email address but for whom a new number was not found through a manual search, sending of an email to ask the mother for her new phone number
- Letter sent by mail to mothers with no email address or valid phone number.
- Calls to contact person's number
- Re-use of refusals/dropouts.

3.2 Protocol for the type of questionnaire to be used

It is strictly identical to that of the survey at two months.

The use of CATI programming means that the questionnaire administered to the mother is determined at the time of contact by means of questions to determine the mother's family situation and the child's living arrangements.

There are thus several types of mother's questionnaire:

- **“mother as reference”**: if the child lives with her (all the time or under a shared custody arrangement).

This is the most detailed questionnaire. It includes practically all questions about the child and the household where the child lives.

- **“non-cohabiting mother”**: if the child lives exclusively with the father.

This questionnaire obtains detailed information on the household of the non-custodial mother but includes few questions about the child since he/she lives with the father.

- **“mother as reference, child in care”**: if the child lives with neither the mother nor the father.

This questionnaire is very similar to that of the “non-cohabiting mother” but includes specific questions on the child’s placement in care.

At the end of the interview with the mother, **if the father’s contact details are available**, the interviewer indicates that he will contact the father in the next few days.² If the mother is happy for the father to be contacted (or does not indicate that he was unwilling to take part), the CATI program defines the type of questionnaire to be administered to the father using the same criteria as those used to determine the questionnaire administered to the mother.

There are several types of “father’s” questionnaire:

- **“father as reference”**: the mother answers the “non-cohabiting mother” questionnaire (child living with father only).

This questionnaire is practically identical to the “mother as reference” questionnaire.

- **“non-cohabiting father”**: the mother answers the “mother as reference” questionnaire and the child lives with her, exclusively or under shared custody.

This questionnaire includes detailed questions to characterize the household of the father, who does not have exclusive custody of the child, but few questions on the child since he/she lives mainly with the mother.³

- **“cohabiting father”**: the mother answers a “mother as reference” questionnaire and the child lives with both mother and father.

This questionnaire (which does not include questions to characterize the household composition already reported by the mother) includes:

- specific questions concerning the father himself (his health for example),
- questions on his relationship with the child,
- questions already asked in the “mother as reference” questionnaire, but for which both partners need to give an answer.

In addition, certain lengthy modules are completed partly by the mother as reference and partly by the cohabiting father (see below).

² It was not possible to administer a mother’s and father’s questionnaire successively on the same day as some of the answers given by the mother were used as filters in the father’s questionnaire to avoid asking duplicate questions. These answers were identified at the end of each day by GFK to prepare the father’s questionnaire for the following day.

³ It is true that in cases of alternating custody, we cannot be certain that the child lives mainly with the mother. In this case, questioning the father as if he did not live with the child follows the same logic as that used to choose the mother as reference parent in situations where the child lives with both parents: we consider that the mother is generally better able to answer certain questions about the child (health, diet). Moreover, in light of the results of the pilot tests, there was every reason to believe that mothers would participate more frequently than fathers, thereby justifying the decision to ask the main questions about the child to the mother.

- **“cohabiting father, child in care”**: the mother answers the questionnaire “mother as reference, child in care”.

This questionnaire is very similar to the “cohabiting father” questionnaire, but obviously does not include questions about the father-child relationship.

- **“non-cohabiting father, child in care”**: the mother answers the questionnaire “mother as reference, child in care” and does not live with the father.

This questionnaire is very similar to the “non-cohabiting father” questionnaire, but obviously does not include questions about the father-child relationship.

3.2.1 Specific cases relative to choice of questionnaire type

- 1) The contacted mother may express a preference for the father to be the reference parent, or cannot assume this role because of language problems, health problems or a prolonged absence, for example.

In these cases, whenever the father is available and agrees to participate, he answers a “father as reference” questionnaire. However, **for the same reasons which prevent the mother from being the reference parent, the “mother as reference” questionnaire is not administered.**

- 2) The mother does not speak/understand French sufficiently to answer the questionnaire and the father who should have been the reference is unable to participate for the same reason.

The interview is conducted in one of the following languages: English, Arabic, Turkish, Wolof or Soninke. In such cases, the questionnaire is a reference parent questionnaire (administered to the mother or father) and the questions are translated by the interviewer into the language spoken by the respondent.

- 3) The mother has a cohabiting female partner

In this case, the mother answers a “mother as reference” questionnaire and the partner answers a “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

3.2.2 Specific cases relative to modules shared between reference parent and cohabiting parent

A certain number of questions concerning modules relative to the “household” (housing, income, educational level and occupational status of all household members) are shared between the “mother as reference” and “cohabiting father” questionnaires. In other words, answers to all questions on the theme concerned are obtained from one or other parent. Four exceptions to this sharing system, linked to non-participation, should be noted:

- 1) The household did not take part in the survey at two months

The modules concerned that had also been administered in the survey at two months are administered to the reference parent alone.

2) Responses to the module(s) concerned were incomplete in the survey at two months (non-participation of the cohabiting partner, and missing information not obtained from reference parent).
The entire modules are administered to the reference parent.

3) The contacted cohabiting father refuses to participate or cannot be reached.

In this case, the mother is contacted again and invited to answer the questions that should have been shared between herself and the cohabiting father.

4) At the end of the questionnaire as reference parent, the mother states that the father should not be contacted as he does not wish to participate.

In this case, she is invited to answer the questions that should have been answered by the father in the modules concerned.

However, the mother did not always agree to answer the questions as in some cases she could no longer be reached. These modules are therefore incomplete, even though the mother's questionnaire is complete.

The variables contained in these modules are called interlinked variables as they may be found either in the cohabiting father questionnaire (when he took part) or in the mother as reference questionnaire when she agreed to answer the questions that should have been answered by the father, or when the entire modules were administered to her alone.

4 Creation of a reference parent datafile from the variables of the “mother” and “father” questionnaires

General principle

The Pandora database in which users can choose the set of variables they require, includes the following information for each child in the base:

- all variables given by the mother (prefix A01M_) in the “mother” questionnaires database and
- all the variables given by the fathers or female partners (prefix A01P_) in the “father” questionnaires database.

whatever the type of questionnaire (reference parent, cohabiting, non-cohabiting) to which the respondents replied.

Hence, to obtain the most detailed information on the household in which each child lives and to work on the largest number of children, users must recover the variables given by the reference parents in the “mother” and “father” databases and concatenate (after harmonization of variable names) the “mother as reference” and “father as reference” questionnaires.

However, this concatenation is not sufficient to fully document certain modules characterizing the household (housing, income, educational level and occupational status of all household members) since some of the so-called interlinked variables are sometimes given in the “mother as reference” questionnaire and sometimes in the “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

This is because in the file resulting from the concatenation, the interlinked variables are included if they were given by the “reference parent” but not if they were given in a “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

To obtain complete information concerning, for example, the dwelling where the child lives, the occupational status and educational levels of all household members, or household income, these variables must be recovered from the “cohabiting father” questionnaire.

Special cases

The interlinked variables may have been given by both parents.

- The mother is the reference and the father (or female partner) is cohabiting but sometimes lives elsewhere. In this case, the mother is asked all the questions relating to interlinked variables.
- The mother as reference gives all these variables (the household did not participate in the survey at two months or did not answer all questions in the relevant modules at two months).

As the father (female partner) was nonetheless invited to participate as cohabiting partner, when he/she took part, he/she may also have given answers for the interlinked variables.

For the data other than those reflecting the parents’ opinions or practices, users must therefore choose whether the variables should be recovered from the reference parent questionnaire or the cohabiting partner questionnaire.

5 Summary of participation levels

Wave 1:

Families to be contacted 2,690
Complete mother as reference questionnaires 2,110
Complete father as reference questionnaires 19
Total reference parent questionnaires 2,129
% participation: 79.1%

Wave 2:

Families to be contacted 4,462
Complete mother as reference questionnaires 3,501
Complete father as reference questionnaires 20
Total reference parent questionnaires 3,521
% participation: 78.9%

Wave 3:

Families to be contacted 5,038
Complete mother as reference questionnaires 3,893
Complete father as reference questionnaires: 18
Total reference parent questionnaires 3,911
% participation: 77.6%

Wave 4:

Families to be contacted 5,514

Complete mother as reference questionnaires 4,278

Complete father as reference questionnaires 32

Total reference parent questionnaires 4,310

% participation: 78.2%

6 Sources and references of questions relating to the various modules

To identify the questions of the standardized questionnaires, use the “search by theme” function of the data access portal

List and personal details of dwelling occupants

Drawn from surveys on resources and living conditions (Enquêtes sur les ressources et conditions de vie, SRCV), INSEE and questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Child in care

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Family situation

Drawn from surveys on resources and living conditions (Enquêtes sur les ressources et conditions de vie, SRCV), INSEE

Situation of non-cohabitation or non-permanent cohabitation of parents

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Separation and relationship with other parent; continued contact with him if he does not live in the household

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Education

Drawn from labour force survey_(Enquête Emploi en continu, EEC) INSEE

Main labour market situation

Drawn from Labour Force survey_(Enquête Emploi en continu, EEC) INSEE

Housing

Housing survey (Enquête Logement), INSEE

Household income

Drawn from surveys on resources and living conditions (Enquêtes sur les ressources et conditions de vie, SRCV), INSEE

Extended family

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Care arrangements

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Child’s psychomotor development

Child Development Inventories (CDI), French version (IDE Inventaire Du Développement de l'Enfant : Duyme M et al. Devenir, 2010. 22:13-26.) Mac Arthur-Bates (11 words : Kern S et al. Approche Neuropsychologique des Apprentissages chez l'Enfant 2010: 217-228)

Child’s diet since birth

The complementary feeding module was created specifically for Elfe by adopting and complementing the questionnaires of the EDEN and Opaline cohorts.

Child's health

Respiratory diseases: adaptation of the ISAAC questionnaires and, for younger children, the PARIS cohort questionnaires.

Accidents: adaptation of the INVS questionnaires on domestic accidents and questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Mother's/father's health and family health history

SF12 (Gandek B et al. J Clin Epidemiol 1998; 51:1171-8), Minimum European Health module (Eurostat-Cox B et al; Int J Public Health 2009; 54:55-60) and questions specially designed for the Elfe survey.

Information on mother's/father's childhood

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Child rearing practices

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Values and affiliations

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Neighbourhood

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey

Infrastructure and cultural amenities

Questions specially designed for the Elfe survey