

National Health Survey and Public Health in Brazil

Pesquisa Nacional de Saúde e a Saúde Pública Brasileira

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The National Health Survey (NHS) was carried out by the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (*Instituto Brasileiro de Geografia e Estatística* – IBGE) in partnership with the Ministry of Health and it constitutes the most comprehensive health survey ever held in Brazil. The preparation for the National Health Survey started in 2009, with the participation of researchers and representatives from technical areas in the Ministry of Health, in a broad consultation process. Within the following years, the preparation and management of the research was conducted, such as ensuring resources from the Ministry of Health, in partnership with IBGE, in order to carry out the NHS, to review the literature, to define the scope of the research, sampling, to define the questionnaires, purchase equipment, logistics, among others. In July 2013, the study was approved by the Research Ethics Committee (CONEP) and, in August, the field work was started, and extended until February 2014. The NHS consisted of over 1000 IBGE technicians collecting data from 1600 Brazilian municipalities.

This supplement of the Brazilian Journal of Epidemiology presents the data from the National Health Survey (NHS). The results of the NHS are representative of the Brazilian population, being the most complete health survey nowadays. The surveys, in turn, in addition to providing information on health, they are essential in order to establish an evaluation of the health systems from the perspective of the user. Also, they are efficient tools for the understanding of the real needs of the population, which are essential for the development and improvement of public health programs and policies.

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The research came up with the objective of improving and expanding the Health Supplements of the National Survey by Household Sampling (*Suplementos Saúde da Pesquisa Nacional por Amostra de Domicílios – PNAD*), previously carried out in the years 1998, 2003 and 2008. Blocks were kept in order to evaluate the use of health services, with the objective of continuing the historical series of the PNAD, and other blocks were expanded, such as the one about life style and reported morbidity, for example. Besides that, the sampling process of the NHS allowed greater geographical scattering and gain regarding the accuracy of the estimates.

The articles presented here were prepared by the department of Health Surveillance in partnership with other areas of the Ministry of Health, and researchers of several Teaching and Research Institutions of the country. This thematic issue regards the first issue of the NHS, which approached lifestyles and the morbidity reported by the Brazilian population, bringing about considerations on the real situation of these matters in the country. There were also released data in relation to the access and use of health services, accidents and violence in the second report, life cycles, anthropometry, blood pressure measures in the third report. Without a doubt, these results will support the management, the research and the improvement of health among Brazilians.

Initiatives such as the NHS strengthen the surveillance and monitoring of health indicators, a national priority. The contribution and distribution of these data is priceless for the improvement of knowledge in the promotion of health and prevention of diseases, as well as the surveillance of health itself.