

POSTER ABSTRACTS

15th Annual HMO Research Network Conference
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11:30 am–Noon & 1:30–2:00 pm
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PS1 – 08

The VDW Census File: Strengths, Issues, and Recommendations for the Future

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Background/Aims: The VDW's Census file contains demographic and socioeconomic data not available anywhere else. This makes it a unique resource for VDW research including studies using Geographic Information Systems data. However, the extent and quality of Census file data at implementing sites has not been subjected to systematic scrutiny. The VDW Census Workgroup was formed under the auspices of the new HMORN governance of the VDW. This workgroup is charged with assessing the census file specification and the quality of the implemented files at HMORN sites. The objectives for the workgroup are to: 1) document area-level data that are currently available at each HMORN site; 2) determine the completeness and consistency of the data; and 3) provide recommendations for improving the scope and completeness of the data in the VDW Census file.

Methods: The workgroup has prepared specifications for a set of descriptive tables, and a metadata survey inquiring how sites have implemented the current Census file. We are currently writing a VDW program to generate site-specific descriptive data.

Results: Our report to the Operations Committee will focus on extent and quality of the Census file data at the various sites, and the consistency in implementation of the specifications across sites. The proposed poster will highlight our findings and provide a more comprehensive view of the available data. The workgroup is currently analyzing data from the metadata survey. A VDW program is being written to generate a rich set of site-specific data. The final report will serve as a basis for establishing the current state of the Census files at each site, and for making recommendations for future improvements. It will also serve as a useful reference for future grant writing efforts.

Implications: We anticipate that the products will facilitate use of the Census File data within and across sites to augment and/or generate research within the CRN that requires detailed geographic data. Our data completeness and quality summaries will enable researchers to assess the feasibility and potential utility of the Census File within their research projects.

Conclusions: We expect to conclude that the data are of general high quality at the sites, but that current ambiguities in the specification will need to be remedied.