
Marital status

Important note: This is an archived metadata standard from the AIHW Knowledgebase. For current metadata standards and related information please access METeOR, the AIHW's Metadata Online Registry at <http://meteor.aihw.gov.au>

Identifying and Definitional Attributes

Data Dictionary: NHADD
Knowledgebase ID: 000923 Version number: 1
Metadata type: DATA ELEMENT
Registration Authority: NHDAMG Admin status: SUPERSEDED
Effective date: 01-MAR-05
Definition: The current marital status of the person.
Context: Marital status is a core data element in a wide range of social, labour and demographic statistics. Its main purpose is analysis of the association of marital status with the need for, and use of, services. Marital status also acts as an indicator for the level of support adult recipients of the welfare system have at home. The item is also used in comparisons of administrative data and population censuses and surveys.

Relational and Representational Attributes

Datatype: Numeric
Representational form: CODE
Representation layout: N
Minimum Size: 1
Maximum Size: 1
Data Domain: 1 Never married
 2 Widowed
 3 Divorced
 4 Separated
 5 Married (registered and defacto)
 9 Not stated / inadequately described

Guide For Use: Refers to the current marital status of a person. Therefore if a person has been divorced but has since re-married, then they should be recorded as 5. Married.
The category Married (registered and de facto) should be generally accepted as applicable to all de facto couples, including of the same sex.

Collection Methods: Although marital status is an important factor in assessing the type and extent of support needs, such as for the elderly living at home, marital status alone does not adequately address the need for information about social support and living arrangements. Other data elements need to be collected to capture this information.

Related metadata: relates to the data element Relationship to reference person version 2
relates to the data element Relationship within income unit version 1

Administrative Attributes

Source Document: National Health Data Dictionary

Source Organisation: National Health Data Committee

Comments: ABS standards (see ABS: Directory of Concepts and Standards for Social, Labour and Demographic statistics) identify two concepts of marital status:

- registered marital status - defined as whether a person has, or has had, a legally registered marriage;
- social marital status - based on a person's living arrangements (including de-facto marriages), as reported by the person.

ABS recommends that the social marital status concept be collected when information on marital status is sought, whereas the registered marital status concept need only be collected where it is specifically required for the purposes of the collection and only in areas of consent if necessary. Most community services data collections ask clients to self-report their marital status. Hence, the operative concept is one of 'social' marital status.

Data Element Links

Information Model Entities linked to this Data Element

Data Agreements which include this Data Element
