IUSSP-PAA Webinar on AI & Demography

Part 2 - 22 October 2026

Written Questions & Answers

Questions answered in writing :

1. Barbara Anderson
Isn't this the idea behind indirect estimation methods? They all take available data and then estimate actual values.

→ Tyler McCormick
Are you asking if the methods for calibration using predicted data are similar to indirect estimation (like small area estimation?)? If so then they're related in that they combine observed data with predictions or extrapolations (smoothing in the case of small area estimation), but the methods used for calibration are different. The prediction-correction methods are more related to the augmented inverse prob weighted estimators, so the goal is more to understand the sampling mechanism for the labels and then correct regression coeffcients.

2. Richard Dackam-Ngatchou
Question to Tyler. Please give your point of view in the following : Artificial intelligence is not an alternative to the population census. In a country like DRC or Cameroon, where the last Population and Housing Census was conducted in 1984 and 2005, claiming that AI could replace a new enumeration would present a methodological paradox: sophisticated models would be expected to compensate for the absence of the very baseline data they need to be properly calibrated and validated.

→ Tyler McCormick
Yes, I agree with your perspective! I use AI extensively in my work because I think it has a lot of potential and given the logistical and financial challenges of these major, comprehensive data collection efforts I think using all the tools at our disposal is really important. But on the other hand, we should be thoughtful about replacing learning about our own behavior with AI.

3. Richard Dackam-Ngatchou (
Question to Madeleine : In all DHS, Infant and maternal mortality indicators are estimated using indirect methods, which already raises concerns about the quality and reliability of these estimates at the national level. Can artificial intelligence really improve the accuracy and reliability of these indicators?

→ Madeleine Short-Fabic
Thanks for your question, Richard. One clarification-- DHS estimates infant and child mortality directly, from pregnancy (earlier birth) histories, and maternal mortality from

sibling histories. Nevertheless, the data do have quality challenges and wide confidence intervals, esp. for maternal mortality. AI could help flag quality issues like age heaping, or help in questionnaire design by building in recall anchors or the like to support respondent recollection. Even so, AI cannot fix everything. Ideally, we'd have strong vital registration systems to capture these data.

4. Livia Montana
For Madeleine: Given the concerns we heard about from Guttmacher, how is the DHS data protected in the field during the AI checks you described? (Flagging the HH composition) Does it remain in a closed environment, how is individual data protected.

→ Madeleine Short-Fabic
Thanks for this question, Livia. We've removed PII before sharing the fieldcheck data with our AI tool and the data we are sharing remains in a closed environment.

Questions answered live (or unanswered)

5. Livia Montana
For Evans: Do you think there is a role for synthetic respondents in demographic and health surveys of the future?

6. Richard Dackam-Ngatchou
Question to Evans : Can artificial intelligence predict behavioral changes that affect the variables underlying demographic indicators produced by Demographic and Health Surveys (DHS) in areas where no survey has been conducted?