Contents

List of Figures xi
List of Tables xii
Preface xiii
Acknowledgments xv
List of Acronyms xvii

Introduction 1
Other Histories of Government Surveys 6
Who Should Read this Book 6

1 President Nixon Launches the War on Drugs 8
Drug Use Prior to the 1960s 9
Links between the Vietnam War and the War on Drugs 10
The Drug War Begins 13
Design of the First National Drug Survey 15
First Commission Report 19
Second National Survey 21

2 The Survey Continues, As Illicit Drug Use Peaks 26
1974 Survey: Public Experience with Psychoactive Substances 27
1976 Survey: Nonmedical Use of Psychoactive Substances 32
1977 and 1979 National Surveys on Drug Abuse (NSDA) 34
Estimating the Prevalence of Heroin Use 36
The Drug War’s Impact on Drug Abuse 38

Wrap-Up for Chapters 1 and 2 45

3 Cocaine and New Directions for the Survey 49
President Reagan’s Drug War 49
1982 National Survey on Drug Abuse 51
Consolidation of National Drug Abuse Data Systems 54
1985 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA) 55
1988 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse 61
Cocaine, Crack, and the Drug Czar 65
Release of the 1988 NHSDA Results 67
viii  Contents

4  The White House Needs Data and a Bigger Survey  71
   A National Drug Index  72
   HHS Responds to the New Requirements  73
   ONDCP Gets Involved  75
   The First National Drug Control Strategy  77
   ONDCP Tells NIDA to Increase the Sample Size  79
   NIDA Responds to ONDCP’s Demands  81
   Addressing Survey Methodology Concerns  84
   ONDCP Pushes for State-Level Estimates  86

5  Criticism, Correction, and Communication  91
   Other Studies Challenge NHSDA Estimates  91
   Final Design for the 1990 Survey  94
   Release of 1990 Results by President Bush  94
   The 1991 NHSDA  97
   Competing Drug Control Strategies  99
   Controversy over Revision of a Key Cocaine Indicator  100
   Pre-Election Data Correction  102
   NHSDA Methodological Research  106
   NIDA and Its Grantees Continue to Oppose the Large Sample  110

Wrap-Up for Chapters 3, 4, and 5  113

6  The Survey Moves to SAMHSA  116
   The Creation of SAMHSA and the Office of Applied Studies  116
   Building OAS  118
   New Leaders and Shifting Policies in the Drug War  120
   1992 NHSDA: Building a Consistent Timetable and Statistical Integrity  121

7  Rising Youth Drug Use in the 1990s  126
   1993 NHSDA  126
   1994 NHSDA: Tracking Trends during a Survey Redesign  128
   Attacks on Clinton’s Drug Policy  130
   Administration Responses to the Increases in Youth Drug Use  132
   1995 NHSDA: Creating a Bridge to the Past  132
   Pre-Release Controls and a Leak of the 1995 Survey Findings  134
   States Legalize Medical Use of Marijuana  138
   1996 NHSDA  139
   1997 NHSDA: Expanded Samples in California and Arizona  140
   1998 NHSDA  141

8  Better Sample, Better Analysis, but Not Always  144
   State and Metropolitan Area Estimates  144
   Miami Success, Thanks to Andrew  145
   New Data for HIV/AIDS Research  147
   How Many People Need Treatment for a Substance Abuse Problem  149
   To Predict the Future, You Must Understand the Past  151

Wrap-Up for Chapters 6, 7, and 8  155
# Table of Contents

## 9 A Perfect Redesign Storm
- Computer-Assisted Interviewing 159
- Estimates for Every State 162
- Tobacco Module 164
- The Final Implementation Plan 166
- How Many Federal Statisticians Does It Take? 167
- The New Sample Design 169
- The New Instrumentation 172
- Respondents Report More Drug Use with Inexperienced Interviewers 175
- The Mode Effect on Reporting of Drug Use: Paper versus Computer 176
- Release of the 1999 State and National Results 177

## 10 Continuing Survey Design Improvements
- Incentive Payments 180
- Improvements in Data Collection Quality Control 181
- Changing the Name of the Survey 182
- Concern about Trend Measurement 183
- Questionnaire Changes 184
- Collecting Urine and Hair from NHSDA Respondents 186
- Results from 2000 through 2002 187
- Impact of the Changes in 2002 191
- Four Years of Redesign 192

Wrap-Up for Chapters 9 and 10 194

## 11 Analytic Bankruptcy, Reorganization, Recovery, and Resilience
- SAMHSA’s Data Strategy and National Outcome Measures 196
- OAS Recovers and Rebuilds 199
- Sharing Data While Protecting Respondent Confidentiality 200
- OAS Becomes a Center 203
- Annual Releases of 2003–2014 NSDUH Results 204
- Estimating First-Time Drug Use (Initiation) 206
- A Powerful Analytic Tool 207

Wrap-Up for Chapters 11 and 12 229

## 12 How to Redesign an Ongoing Survey, or Not
- Conceptual Approval for a Redesign 212
- Areas for Improvement 214
- Methodological Research to Guide Design Decisions 215
- Assessing Data Users’ Needs 215
- Advice from Outside Experts 216
- Managing the Redesign Work While Continuing the Survey 216
- Final Design Decisions 217
- Redesign Effects on Estimates 220
- Other Changes Considered for the Survey 222
- Mental Health Surveillance 225

Wrap-Up for Chapters 11 and 12 229
Table of Contents

13 Lessons Learned and Future Challenges 232
   Improving Communication While Maintaining Statistical Integrity 232
   The Value of Methodological Research 233
   Managing Survey Redesigns 234
   Effective Use of Consultants 235
   Making Connections across the Survey Research Community 256
   The Real Value of Surveys: Findings 237
   Next for NSDUH 238
   Challenges for Surveys, Statisticians, and Users of Survey Data 240

Appendix 243
Bibliography 246
Index 256