In the June 9, 1994, Federal Register notice, OMB asked for public comment on (1) the adequacy of the current categories, (2) the principles that should guide the development of proposed new categories, and (3) specific suggestions for changes that should be considered. In the 90-day public comment period that ended on September 1, 1994, OMB received more than 800 letters from interested parties, including individuals, data users, and data providers. The comments provided a wealth of information on how the current categories and the standards for collection and presentation of data on race and ethnicity are used. The comments also highlighted the need for more detailed or more complex categories to improve the quality of the data.

The future research agenda is described in Section C below.
The primary focus of a statistical report is on two or more specific identifiable groups in the population, and to describe data relating to the remainder of the population by an appropriate collective description. For Hispanic categories, the most summary distinction between the majority and minority traces is appropriate; "All Other Races," as collective descriptions of minority traces when the most summary distinction between the majority and minority traces is appropriate. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is undertaking a project to evaluate the recording of racial categories on death certificates. A brief summary of the future research priorities provides the last opportunity for public comment on priorities for research in 1996. Evaluations show high nonresponse (10 percent; research shows most are not Hispanics) and misreporting (for one in three persons who did not mark a race circle, wrote in a response reflecting Hispanic ethnicity. It is impossible. --Costly: Requires precise, multicolor printing (color tones will vary among forms) when one-color (usually black) printing is now the case for most forms and questionnaires. Displays of racial and ethnic compliance and statistical data will use the category designations listed above. Any changes in the categories should be based on sound methodological research and should include evaluations of the impact of race and ethnic categories on racial and ethnic classification. Pros of Option (d)(2): Tabulation and analysis: --Detail allows flexibility. Indicates extent and makeup of Nation's diversity. --Can be used to show the distribution of responses across different races and ethnicities. Cons of Option (d)(2): Tabulation and analysis: --No historical continuity; does not meet program needs. --Skin color (melanin content) is not the sole way people identify their race and ethnicity. Tabulations and analysis: --For Federal agencies, the consolidation of race and ethnicity would allow for the establishment of tabulations in one race and ethnicity categories in several studies. However, continuity is already expected due to changes in program and agency requirements. Terminology: This concept is not consistent with the intent to change or develop current concepts and terminology. Pros of Option (e)(2): Tabulation and analysis: --Improves the ability to study the relationship between race and ethnicity and health outcomes. --More accurately identifies minority groups. Cons of Option (e)(2): Tabulation and analysis: --Open-ended question: Multiracial identification not allowed (must pick one broad category). Multiracial Category.--Research and testing of a multiracial category is especially critical.
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