

Lab Data Set: NPHS

The data set that we will be using for lab sessions comes from the 1994 Canadian National Population Health Survey.¹ We will focus mainly on three constructs, psychological distress, confidante relationships, and mastery. For this version of the data set, there are no missing values. We will discuss analyses with missing data later in the course. The data are available for download at <http://web.pdx.edu/~newsomj/data.htm>.

Psychological Distress

Kessler's six-item psychological distress scale (K6 version; Furukawa, Kessler, Slade, & Andrews, 2003) assesses negative affect with the question "How often do you feel": "nothing could cheer you up" (*cheer*), "nervous" (*nervous*) "restless" (*restless*), "hopeless" (*hopeless*), "worthless" (*worthless*) "everything is an effort" (*effort*). Responses are on a 5-point scale 1 = none to 5 = all. The variable *distress* is an average of the items. Higher scores indicate greater psychological distress.

Confidante Support

Four binary items (0 = "no," 1 = "yes") are about the presence or absence of close network members whom the respondent feels he or she can confide in (I don't know the source of this scale). "Do you have someone you can confide n/talk to about your private feelings" (*confide*), "Do you have someone you can really count on in a crisis situation" (*crisis*), "Do you have someone you can really count on when you make personal decisions" (*personal*), and "Do you have someone who makes you feel loved and cared for" (*loved*). The variable *conf* is the sum of these four items, with higher scores indicating more availability of confidante support.

Sense of Mastery

The mastery scale, developed by Pearlin and Schooler (1978), assesses the extent to which an individual feels he or she has control over events. There are seven questions, each rated on a 5-point scale of agreement, ranging from 1=strongly agree to 5=strongly disagree. Some items are reverse scored so that all items are keyed in the same direction. Higher scores indicate greater mastery or internal locus of control. "You have little control over the things that happen to you" (*control*), "There is really no way you can solve some of the problems you have" (*problems*), "There is little you can do to change many of the important things in your life" (*change*), "You often feel helpless in dealing with problems of life" (*helpless*), "Sometimes you feel that you are being pushed around in life" (*pushed*), "What happens to you in the future mostly depends on you (reversed)"(*future*), "You can do just about anything you really set your mind to (reversed)." (*anything*). The variable *mastery* is an average of the items, with higher scores indicating greater mastery or internal control.

References

Furukawa, T. A., Kessler, R. C., Slade, T., & Andrews, G. (2003). The performance of the K6 and K10 screening scales for psychological distress in the Australian National Survey of Mental Health and Well-Being. *Psychological medicine*, 33(02), 357-362.

Pearlin, L. I., & Schooler, C. (1978). The structure of coping. *Journal of health and social behavior*, 2-21.

¹ A random subset of cases is used. More information about the study is available at: <http://www23.statcan.gc.ca/imdb/p2SV.pl?Function=getSurvey&SDDS=3225>