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Subject: Information on whether a birth was preterm ?  
Posted by [MBruederle](#) on Wed, 17 Aug 2016 09:13:26 GMT  
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Hello,  
Is there any information on the number of completed weeks of gestation of a pregnancy in the birth record? Or any indicator variable on whether a birth was preterm?  
I would have expected this very important birth characteristic to be in the data, but I could not find it.  
Best regards  
Anna

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Subject: Re: Information on whether a birth was preterm ?  
Posted by [Liz-DHS](#) on Wed, 24 Aug 2016 15:52:09 GMT  
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Dear User,  
A response from technical expert, Mr. Trevor Croft:  
Quote:  
in the calendar we have information on duration of pregnancy recorded in months only (not weeks) for the births and other pregnancies in the last 5 years. It doesn't give a very good estimation of the gestation period as it is very approximate and only in months.  
  
Separate information on miscarriages, abortions and stillbirths is also collected, either just in the calendar, or occasionally in a pregnancy history, but again duration of the pregnancy is only in months.

Thank you!

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Subject: Re: Information on whether a birth was preterm ?  
Posted by [MBruederle](#) on Mon, 12 Dec 2016 11:46:51 GMT  
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Dear Trevor,  
I am coming back to your reply with much delay... Information on pregnancy duration in months would already be very helpful. In which dataset / which variables can I find that information?  
Many thanks for your help.  
Best  
Anna

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Subject: Re: Information on whether a birth was preterm ?  
Posted by [Trevor-DHS](#) on Thu, 22 Dec 2016 07:09:51 GMT  
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There are two sources for duration of pregnancy, depending on the survey.

If the survey used a pregnancy history then there are survey specific variables that contain the pregnancy history data. These will often have names like S215 (where S means survey specific and 215 would be the question number). The variable name will be different from survey to survey but you should be able to find it with a name similar to this (check for any variable starting with "S21" or "S22"). This is only available for a relatively small set of surveys. You can see the list of surveys using the pregnancy history with:

<http://api.dhsprogram.com/rest/dhs/surveys?f=html&SurveyStatus=All&SurveyCharacteristicIds=30>

In surveys that used a reproductive/contraceptive calendar (found in vcal\_1 [Stata] or vcal\$1 [SPSS] in the Individual Recode files) the duration of the pregnancy is included for pregnancies in the 5 and a bit years preceding the survey (the calendar typically goes back to January of the year five years before the survey, thus the extra bit). This is a text string of 80 characters, with each character position representing one month in the respondents life. In the calendar text string the left hand end of the string is nearest the month of interview, with blanks at the beginning representing months after the date of interview. Once you see the characters start in the string there will be a character for every month to the start point of the calendar five+ years before the survey. A letter "B" indicates a month in which a birth took place, and a series of letter "P"s to the right of that represents each other month in which the respondent was pregnant. The duration of pregnancy is given by the number of "P"s plus 1 for the "B" in the month of birth.

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Subject: Re: Information on whether a birth was preterm ?  
Posted by [MBruederle](#) on Mon, 09 Jan 2017 15:44:48 GMT  
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Dear Trevor,  
this is extremely helpful, sincere thanks.  
Just as a feedback to the DHS team, the calendar variable is very poorly documented in the Recode Manual, and in the variable description in the data set. No key word search would help identify this variable as containing information on pregnancies / preterm births / pregnancy terminations. It would be helpful to complement the description of this variable in the manual along the lines of the explanation you gave below.

One more inquiry: Is there by any chance any stata code readily available to generate from the calendar new variables on each of the pregnancies?

Thank you again.

Best, Anna

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Subject: Re: Information on whether a birth was preterm ?  
Posted by [Trevor-DHS](#) on Mon, 09 Jan 2017 21:45:52 GMT  
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Thanks for your feedback - good points on the recode manual. We will look to improve the description of the calendar in the next version of the recode manual.  
I don't think we have code currently that does what you want, but there are some examples of code for handling the calendar in the user forum. Try searching for "calendar" or "stillbirth".

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Subject: Re: Information on whether a birth was preterm ?  
Posted by [chr8850](#) on Wed, 06 Apr 2022 17:18:45 GMT  
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Hi Trevor  
In the surveys with a pregnancy history i cannot see a variable to determine duration of pregnancy for those births born alive in the Ghana 2017 MHS - can you please advise where this is? There is the date of birth but how do we know how long the pregnancy lasted?  
Thanks

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