Subject: DHS Variable m18 and m19 values meaning
Posted by lgcal on Fri, 06 Dec 2024 21:08:28 GMT

In the Nigeria DHS data (from 2003 to 2018), there is a variable noted as m18 which signifies the size of the child at birth and the summary shows a range of 1 to 9. Unfortunately, I am unsure on what the units are for this range (pounds, lbs, inches, etc) and cant seem to find this in the documentation anywhere.

Additionally, a variable, m19(_1,2 depending on the respective child), shows birth weight in kilograms. This ranges from 500 to 9999 which seems surprising at first glance but I believe this is represented in grams and is meant to have a decimal to indicate 0.0500 and 0.999 kg - wanted to confirm if this is the right thinking or if there is something else to note here.

Subject: Re: DHS Variable m18 and m19 values meaning
Posted by Janet-DHS on Tue, 10 Dec 2024 14:58:02 GMT

Following is a response from DHS staff member, Tom Pullum:

I recommend using the KR file, e.g. NGKR7BFL.dta, in which the children are cases and you don't have subscripts (_1, _2, etc.). In Stata, enter "describe m18 m19". The results will tell you the names of the labels. In the 2018 survey the label names are M18 and M19, respectively. To see what the codes for m18 refer to, enter "label list M18":
. label list M18

M18:
          1 very large
          2 larger than average
          3 average
          4 smaller than average
          5 very small
          8 don't know

There are only 5 legal values, apart from 8. These are very subjective. Beware the reverse coding: a larger code indicates a smaller baby.

For m19, the variable label is "birth weight in kilograms (3 decimals)". That means you divide the number by 1000 to get weight in kg. Then
. label list M19

M19:
       9996 not weighed at birth
       9998 don't know

These codes must be excluded for the calculation of means or other statistics. Some weights, in some surveys, are implausibly low or high and should be taken cautiously.