Subject: Month of birth recording in IR
Posted by Alexis on Wed, 12 Jun 2019 11:38:24 GMT
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Hello,

I'm working on multiple DHS datasets and I wanted to use the information on the month of birth of women in IR datasets. However, it is common that the distribution of months of birth is not evenly distributed and that more women are born at the beginning of the year than at the end of the year. This is still the case when I use the v014 variable to only keep observations with complete age information.

As an example please see below some surveys with a large bias but there are many more surveys that seems to show this pattern. This is using the month of birth of women; months of birth of children seem to be more evenly distributed. I understand that there might be no birth certificate but I'm surprised that it is always biased towards the beginning of the year. Do interviewers record January if they are not sure of the month of birth?

Burkina Faso 2014 (BFIR70FL):
. tab v009 if v014==1 [aw=v005]

respondent'
s month of
birth Freq.   Percent Cum.

1	3,052.2068	47.88	47.88
2	327.201778	5.13	53.01
3	309.809501	4.86	57.87
4	314.853944	4.94	62.81
5	262.622618	4.12	66.93
6	267.081004	4.19	71.12
7	271.175631	4.25	75.37
8	256.894687	4.03	79.40
9	227.786846	3.57	82.97
10	318.383412	4.99	87.97
11	212.438137	3.33	91.30
12	554.545677	8.70	100.00

Total 6,375   100.00

Afghanistan 2015 (AFIR70FL)
. tab v009 if v014==1 [aw=v005]

respondent' |
 s month of |
     birth | Freq.   Percent   Cum.
------------+---------------------------------

```
          1 | 1,614.1386      9.09      9.09
          2 | 2,544.3889     14.33     23.42
          3 | 2,428.1078     13.67     37.09
          4 | 1,774.7469      9.99     47.08
          5 | 1,863.0132     10.49     57.57
          6 |1,601.14519      9.02     66.59
          7 |  1,208.168      6.80     73.39
          8 | 1,007.6137      5.67     79.07
          9 |  1,256.037      7.07     86.14
         10 | 1,034.7895      5.83     91.97
         11 | 808.320749      4.55     96.52
         12 |618.5304505      3.48    100.00
------------+---------------------------------
      Total |   17,759    100.00
```

Cote d'Ivoire 2011-12 (CIIR62FL)
. tab v009 if v014==1 [aw=v005]

```
respondent' |
 s month of |
      birth |    Freq.    Percent     Cum.
------------+---------------------------------
          1 | 2,546.0023     29.45     29.45
          2 |  715.87848      8.28     37.74
          3 | 656.813988      7.60     45.33
          4 | 542.819071      6.28     51.61
          5 | 572.299899      6.62     58.23
          6 | 532.295654      6.16     64.39
          7 | 509.972343      5.90     70.29
          8 | 508.296997      5.88     76.17
          9 | 411.078436      4.76     80.93
         10 |  400.15638      4.63     85.56
         11 | 398.032321      4.60     90.16
         12 | 850.354166      9.84    100.00
------------+---------------------------------
      Total |    8,644    100.00
```

Subject: Re: Month of birth recording in IR
Posted by Beza_Alem on Sun, 21 Aug 2022 03:29:03 GMT
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Hello,
I am working on a project looking into birth months. I am faced with the similar problem where

births are concentrated in January. Were you able to find a solution? or identify the cause of the birth pattern?

thank you

Subject: Re: Month of birth recording in IR
Posted by Alexis on Mon, 22 Aug 2022 10:07:54 GMT
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No I did not find the cause of this pattern. I imagine a lot of women don't know their exact month of birth and it's coded as January. I did not use this information for this reason.

Subject: Re: Month of birth recording in IR
Posted by Janet-DHS on Thu, 01 Sep 2022 20:31:22 GMT
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Following is a response from DHS Research & Data Analysis Director, Tom Pullum:

The reason for this pattern was described in
https://www.dhsprogram.com/pubs/pdf/MR26/MR26.pdf, beginning on page 7. It is basically due to a tendency by interviewers to calculate birth year as the year of the survey minus the completed years of age, and then to look for a month and day that are compatible with that birth year and age. This forces births into the first part of the year. The effect is most serious for interviews that are earlier in the calendar year.