

NEW ISSUE

Domiciliary Services Victoria, 1986. Confidentialised Unit Record File: User Guide.

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INQUIRIES

- For more information about these and related statistics, contact Information Services on (03) 9615-7755 or refer to the back cover of this publication.

INTRODUCTION

The Domiciliary Services Victoria Survey Confidentialised Unit Record File (CURF) contains information about assistance with household tasks received from family members, neighbours, friends, organisations or paid help.

SURVEY BACKGROUND

The survey was conducted throughout Victoria in October 1986, as a supplement to the Australia-wide Monthly Population survey. The survey was requested by Community Services Victoria and the Victorian Health Department.

Information was collected on type of assistance, main reason for assistance, whether formal or informal assistance, frequency of assistance, source of assistance, home maintenance tasks, transport (source of assistance and destination), and unmet need by category of need. Socio-demographic variables include: household type, age group (elderly population only), sex and birthplace (5 categories). Geographic definition is at Melbourne Statistical Division and Rest of Victoria level. This material was published in ABS Cat. No. 4402.2.

The tasks included were meals, laundry, housework, gardening, mowing, home maintenance, and transport. Information was also collected about nursing, personal, and paramedical care received within the home. The survey ascertained the number of household members who had been an inpatient in a hospital or nursing home during the 12 months prior to interview. Information was obtained from all households regarding the need for assistance and care.

The purpose of this User Guide is to provide sufficient information to enable analysis of the CURF. With this in mind the User Guide does the following :

- provides detailed documentation describing data on the CURF;
- describes issues that may affect analysis, such as weighting.

Any inquiries concerning the CURF or the contents of this User Guide should be directed to:

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

MONTHLY POPULATION SURVEY

Survey design

The Monthly Population Survey is based on a multi-stage sample of private and non-private dwellings. The sample covers about two-thirds of one per cent of the civilian population of Australia and includes about one-half of one per cent of Victoria's population. Information is obtained from the occupants of selected dwellings by personal interview.

The Monthly Population Survey is made up of the Labour Force Survey and, for most months of the year, a supplementary survey. The main emphasis of the Monthly Population Survey is on the regular collection of specific data on demographic and labour force characteristics of the population and, for this reason, this component is usually referred to as the Labour Force Survey. Supplementary surveys are carried out on a wide range of topics.

Scope

All persons aged 15 years and over are included in the scope of the Labour Force Survey except: members of the permanent defence forces; certain diplomatic personnel of overseas governments customarily excluded from census and estimated populations; overseas visitors holidaying in Australia and members of non-Australian defence forces (and their dependants) stationed in Australia.

SUPPLEMENTARY SURVEY

Survey design

The Supplementary survey was conducted using the sample of privately occupied dwellings in Victoria that were included in the Monthly Population Survey. This provided a sample of approximately 6,500 dwellings where a full response was obtained. Information was obtained from any responsible adult on behalf of all other members of the household.

The design of the survey took into account that households with elderly members were more likely to be receiving a domiciliary service. Thus, a complete set of questions were asked in households where there was at least one elderly resident (elderly being defined as aged 60 or over). In households without elderly residents a set of filtering questions were asked. If households were receiving assistance with household tasks because it was convenient or they were willing to pay, the assistance was defined as being not a domiciliary service and therefore not within the scope of this survey. Thus no further questions regarding these services were asked. If any assistance received was of a domiciliary nature the same questions (as for households with elderly residents) were asked.

Scope

All households in private dwellings were included in the scope of this supplementary survey if at least one member of the household was in scope for the Labour Force Survey, excluding a small number of households where none of the members were usual residents of that dwelling (e.g. holiday houses).

Using Weights

Weights must be used if the analysis requires population estimates rather than sample counts. The CURF contains a weight for each household record. When the data is weighted, the total estimated population of Victorian households is 1,426,300. All weights should be divided by a factor of 10,000 before being applied to the data; this regime being used to avoid decimal points in the weights.

Analysing The Data

When analysing survey microdata it is important to take into account factors that may affect the reliability of the results to some extent. The following general issues warrant consideration:

- errors caused by non-response
- processing errors
- respondent errors
- other specific analysis issues addressed below.

Sampling error

Estimates calculated from the survey are based on information collected from a sample. As a result, they are subject to sampling error (or sampling variability). Two types of error are possible in an estimate based on a sample survey: sampling error and non-sampling error. Sampling error is a measure of the variability that occurs by chance because a sample, rather than the entire population, is surveyed. Since estimates from the survey are based on information obtained from a sample of persons, they are subject to sampling variability; that is, they may differ from the estimates that would have been produced if all in-scope persons had been included in the survey.

One measure of the likely difference is given by standard error, which indicates the extent to which an estimate might have varied by chance because only a sample of persons was included. Standard errors for this survey are shown on page 14. There are about two chances in three that a sample estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the estimate that would have been obtained if all persons had been included, and about 19 chances in 20 that the difference will be less than two standard errors. Another measure of sampling variability is the relative standard error which is obtained by expressing the standard error as a percentage of the estimate to which it refers. The relative standard error is a useful measure, in that it provides an immediate indication of the percentage error likely to have occurred due to sampling, and thus avoids the need to also refer to the size of the estimate.

Non-sampling error

Apart from the variability associated with sampling error, data are also subject to other types of error referred to as non-sampling error. Non-sampling error may occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents or recording by interviewers, poor questionnaire design, and errors in processing data.

The imprecision due to sampling variability, which is measured by the standard error, should not be confused with inaccuracies that may occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents, errors made in collection such as in

recording and coding data, and errors made in processing the data. Inaccuracies of this kind are referred to as the non-sampling error and may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or sample. It is not possible to quantify non-sampling error, but every effort is made to reduce it to a minimum. In practice, potential for non-sampling error adds to the uncertainty of estimates experiencing sampling variability.

Testing of survey procedures was carried out to investigate respondent reaction and ensure the effectiveness of survey instruments, interviewing procedures and processing systems. Non-response occurs when people cannot or will not cooperate, or cannot be contacted. Non-response can affect the reliability of results and introduce bias. The magnitude of any bias depends upon the extent of difference between non-respondents' characteristics and those of survey respondents. Weighting can partially correct these biases to the extent that weighting variables capture the characteristics of non-respondents.

The following methods were adopted to reduce the level of non-response: face to face interviews with respondents; follow-up of respondents if there was initially no response; and weighting to population benchmarks to reduce non-response bias. Potential sources of response error in the survey include questionnaire design and methodology; deficiency in interviewing technique; and inaccurate reporting by respondents. The survey questionnaire was thoroughly tested to minimise potential errors caused by ambiguous or misleading questions, inadequate or inconsistent definitions or terminology, or poor questionnaire sequence guides (causing some questions to be missed).

CURF CD FILES

THE CD-ROM CONTAINS THE FOLLOWING FILES:

DS86V.DAT

This file contains confidentialised survey data in hierarchical column delimited ASCII text format.

DS86V.TXT

This file contains documentation of the DS86V.DAT raw data including data item labels, field start positions and lengths, code values and category labels. To assist users with data analysis it also contains weighted and unweighted frequencies of each code value. The file is in plain text format to facilitate reading or printing using most word processors.

DS86V.FMT

This file contains the same data as DS86V.TXT but in a computer-readable format, the structure of which is described in the file FMTSTRUC.TXT. The metadata in this file can be combined with the data in DS86V.DAT by means of a computer program run in the client's statistical analysis environment, to produce the datasets needed for survey analysis. This has been done for SAS and SPSS for Windows, but clients with other statistical software will have to write their own programs using the SAS and SPSS programs as a guide.

FMTSTRUC.TXT

This file describes the structure of DS86V.FMT.

CURFSAS.SAS

This file contains the SAS program which was used to reformat the metadata in DS86V.FMT into the SAS input program in DS86V.SAS.

CURFSPSS.SAS

This file contains the SAS program which was used to reformat the metadata in DS86V.FMT into the SPSS input program in DS86V.SPS.

DS86V.SAS

This file contains the SAS input program generated using CURFSAS.SAS which was used to read the data in DS86V.DAT into the SAS datasets DS86VHSH.SD2, DS86VPSN.SD2 and DS86VEXP.SD2.

DS86V.SPS

This file contains the SPSS input program generated using CURFSPSS.SAS which was used to read the data in DS86V.DAT into the SPSS dataset DS86V.SAV.

86V.SD2

This file contains data for the CURF in SAS for Windows format.

DS86V.SAV

This file contains the CURF data in SPSS for Windows format. The load process flattens the file by duplicating the household and person level data for every expenditure record.

README.TXT

This file contains a brief description of each of the files comprising a survey CURF package available for purchase by clients of the ABS.

Note To Clients Without Sas Or Spss

You will need to examine FMTSTRUC.TXT, DS86V.FMT, CURFSAS.SAS, and DS86V.SAS to understand how the data was loaded into SAS for Windows. You will also need to examine the documentation for your analysis software to determine the structure of the load program it requires. You will then have to write your own version of CURFSAS.SAS (in any programming language) to reformat the data in DS86V.FMT into an input program (like DS86V.SAS) for your analysis package. This program can then be run using your analysis package to import the survey data from DS86V.DAT.

DATA DEFINITIONS

HOUSEHOLD

A household is a group of dwelling residents who share common facilities and meals or who consider themselves to be a household. It is possible for more than one household to live in one dwelling; for example, where regular provision is made for groups to take meals separately and where persons consider their households to be separate.

TYPE OF DWELLING

House: includes farm houses, separate houses, duplex houses, terrace/row houses, town houses.

Flat: includes all flats, apartments, villa units, granny flats, bungalows, and dwellings above shops. Also, includes a small number of 'other' type dwellings.

HOUSEHOLD SERVICES RECEIVED

A series of questions dealt with assistance given to households with household tasks. To be defined as a domiciliary service, the provider(s) of the assistance had to come to the recipient's home. Any assistance given by occupants of the dwelling were excluded from household services. Information was collected about the following tasks:

Meals: assistance with meals refers to cases where food is prepared elsewhere and delivered in a ready to eat/heat form or food is prepared in the recipient's home by someone who visits.

Laundry and housework: includes assistance with chores such as washing, ironing, vacuuming, cleaning, polishing, etc.

Gardening and mowing: maintaining gardens and/or mowing lawns .

Home maintenance: includes the following types of assistance:

- (a) Minor repairs: repairs to windows, walls, cupboards, doors, fences, gates, steps, etc.
- (b) Minor alterations: installing security locks, doors, shelving, grabrails, etc.
- (c) Other chores: chopping wood, cleaning windows, clearing guttering, changing light globes, etc.

Note: Home maintenance excludes major tasks such as extensions, painting a house, electrical rewiring, major renovations, etc.

Transport: includes transport provided by anyone coming to the home to provide transport to shops, medical centre, for recreation and outings, etc. Excludes transportation to work.

SOURCES OF HOUSEHOLD ASSISTANCE

Published household assistance data divided providers into informal and formal sources.

- Informal sources: include family, friends, or neighbours who either come to the recipient's home to provide care, or live with the recipient and provide care.
- Formal sources: include community organisations, paid help, nursing services, and hospital staff.

HEALTH CARE SERVICES RECEIVED

A series of questions dealt with assistance given to households involving health care. Information was collected about care received from within the home, as well as care received from sources outside the home. Information was collected about the following services:

Nursing care: usually provided by a trained nurse, or trained householder.

Personal care: help with daily living, e.g. assistance with showering, dressing, or eating. It also includes less frequently required help, e.g. hairdressing. Excludes dressing, washing, feeding, etc. of infants.

Paramedical care: includes podiatry, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, etc.

SOURCES OF HEALTH CARE ASSISTANCE

Informal sources are family, friends, or neighbours who either come to the recipient's home to provide the care, or live with the recipient and provide care. Formal sources include nursing services hospital staff, community organisations and paid help.

REASON SERVICES WERE RECEIVED

Convenience/willingness to pay: households who were receiving help because it was convenient or they were willing to pay for it.

Medical problems: due to one or more members suffering from an acute medical problem, e.g. post operative illness or care.

Family in crisis: included families in poverty, trauma in the family, etc.

UNMET NEED

For household and health care tasks, questions were asked to determine whether an unmet need existed.

No assistance received: where no assistance was being received with a task and assistance was needed, the household was considered to have a fully unmet need with that task.

Partial assistance received: where some assistance was being received with a task, but further assistance was needed, the household was considered to have a partially unmet need with that task.

REASONS SERVICES WERE NOT RECEIVED

These questions were asked of households, who indicated they currently needed particular services but were not receiving them.

None available: household believed no service was available.

Wish to be independent: household may have indicated that assistance was required, but would rather remain independent than become dependent on others.

DURING THE LAST 12 MONTHS

In the publication, *during the last 12 months* refers to help received between 1st October 1985 and the survey week in October 1986. This includes assistance received by all persons who had been usual residents of the household at any time during the 12 months.

Hospital/nursing home inpatient: To be included in this category a person must have remained in a hospital or nursing home for a minimum of one night; includes babies born in hospital.

DEMOGRAPHIC ITEMS

The items: sex of residents, age of residents, and household type were derived for all households where there was at least one elderly resident (elderly being defined as aged 60 or over).

The item country of birth was derived for all households with residents aged 60 and over. For these households, county of birth of only the elderly residents was derived and coded to either single countries (e.g. all elderly residents born in Australia), or to mixed countries (e.g. the code Australia and other indicates at least one elderly resident born in Australia, the other(s) born elsewhere).

POPULATIONS

The major populations used in this survey are:

All households: include estimates from all households.

Households with elderly residents: include estimates from all households with at least one resident aged 60 or over.

Households without elderly residents: include estimates from all households with no elderly residents.

Households with all elderly residents: include estimates from all households with all residents aged 60 and over.

TECHNICAL NOTES



RELIABILITY OF ESTIMATES

Estimates in this data set are subject to errors from two sources:

Sampling error. Since the estimates are based on information obtained from occupants of only a sample of dwellings, the estimates may differ from the figures that would have been produced if all dwellings had been included in the survey.

Published data included estimates with relative standard errors up to 50 per cent. Estimates with a relative standard error of less than 25 per cent are considered sufficiently reliable for most purposes. Estimates with relative standard errors of 25 to 50 per cent carry the symbol * indicating they should be used with caution. Estimates with relative standard errors greater than 50 per cent are not considered sufficiently reliable to publish and are indicated by the symbol **. Although figures for these small components can in some cases be derived by subtraction, they should not be regarded as reliable.

Non-sampling error. Inaccuracies may occur because of imperfections in reporting by respondents, interviewers, and errors made in the coding and processing of data. These inaccuracies may occur in any enumeration, whether it be a full count or a sample. Every effort is made to reduce the non-sampling error to a minimum.

COMPARABILITY WITH DATA FROM OTHER SOURCES

Several factors may affect the comparability of this data set with information from other sources. These include:

- (a) the scope of this survey;
- (b) the wording of questions asked;
- (c) the way questions were asked (e.g. personal interview rather than self-administered questionnaire).

RELATED PUBLICATIONS

The ABS produces a wide range of publications of social and demographic statistics. Other ABS publications which relate to this survey topic include:

Care for the Aged at Home, Queensland, October 1983 (4306.3) (irregular).

Accommodation for the Aged, South Australia, 1985 (4102.4) (irregular).

Australia's Aged Population, 1982 (4109.0) irregular.

Australian Health Survey 1983 (4311.0) (irregular).

Handicapped Persons Australia, 1981 (4343.0) (irregular).

Health (4302.2).

Social Indicators Victoria No. 1, (4101.2).

Current publications produced by the ABS are listed in the *Catalogue of Publications, Australia* (1101.0), which is available from any ABS office.

STANDARD ERROR

The figures contained in this data set are estimates based on a sample of approximately 6500 households in Victoria during October 1986. These estimates may differ from

figures that would have been produced if data had been collected from all households in Victoria. One measure of the reliability of an estimate is known as its 'standard error'.

There are about two chances in three (67 per cent) that an estimate will differ by less than one standard error from the figure that would have been obtained if all households had been included in the survey. There are about nineteen chances in twenty (95 per cent chance) that the difference will be less than two standard errors.

A standard error expressed as a percentage of the estimate is known as relative standard error. For example, if an estimate of 4,000 has a standard error of 1,000 then the estimate has relative standard error of $1,000/4,000 \times 100 = 25$ per cent. The relative standard error is a useful measure in providing an immediate indication of the percentage errors likely to have occurred due to sampling.

Estimates below 1,000 were excluded from publication and were replaced with two asterisks (**) because they are subject to high relative standard errors (more than 50 per cent). Although figures for these small components can in some cases be derived by subtraction they should not be regarded as reliable.

Estimates between 1,000 and 3,400 were included in the publication preceded by an asterisk, for example *1.6. This is to highlight the need for care in using the data because of high relative standard error (between 25 and 50 per cent).

An example of the calculation and use of standard errors follows. In October 1986, there were an estimated 9,500 households with elderly residents who were receiving some assistance with meals provision. Referring to Table A (on page 14), an estimate of 19,500 has a standard error of approximately 2,000. There are therefore two chances in three that the number that would have been produced if all households had been included in the survey lies in the range $19,500 - 2,000 = 17,500$ and $19,500 + 2,000 = 21,500$. There are nineteen chances in twenty that the number lies in the range $19,500 - (2 \times 2,000) = 15,500$ and $19,500 + (2 \times 2,000) = 23,500$.

TABLE A. STANDARD ERROR OF ESTIMATES (a), SURVEY OF DOMICILIARY SERVICES USE, VICTORIA, OCTOBER 1986

Size of estimate ('000)	Standard error		2 chances in 3 that actual population will fall in range (b) ('000)		19 chances in 20 that actual population will fall in range (b) ('000)	
	Standard error of estimate ('000)	Relative standard error (b) (Per cent)				
1.0	0.5	48.7	0.5	— 1.5	0.0	— 2.0
1.3	0.6	42.8	0.7	— 1.9	0.1	— 2.5
1.5	0.6	39.8	0.9	— 2.1	0.3	— 2.7
1.8	0.7	36.3	1.1	— 2.5	0.4	— 3.2
2.0	0.7	34.4	1.3	— 2.7	0.6	— 3.4
2.5	0.8	30.7	1.7	— 3.3	0.9	— 4.1
3.0	0.8	27.9	2.2	— 3.8	1.4	— 4.6
3.5	0.9	25.7	2.6	— 4.4	1.7	— 5.3
4.0	1.0	24.0	3.0	— 5.0	2.0	— 6.0
4.5	1.0	22.5	3.5	— 5.5	2.5	— 6.5
5.0	1.1	21.3	3.9	— 6.1	2.8	— 7.2
6.0	1.2	19.3	4.8	— 7.2	3.6	— 8.4
10.0	1.5	14.5	8.5	— 11.5	7.0	— 13.0
20.0	2.0	9.8	18.0	— 22.0	16.0	— 24.0
50.0	2.9	5.7	47.1	— 52.9	44.2	— 55.8
100.0	3.7	3.7	96.3	— 103.7	92.6	— 107.4
200.0	4.8	2.4	195.2	— 204.8	190.4	— 209.4
300.0	5.5	1.8	294.5	— 305.5	289.0	— 311.0
500.0	6.5	1.3	493.5	— 506.5	487.0	— 513.0
1 000.0	8.1	0.8	991.9	— 1 008.1	983.8	— 1016.2
2 000.0	9.9	0.5	1 990.1	— 2 009.9	1 980.2	— 2019.8

¹(a) The figures have been rounded. (b) These figures have been calculated using the actual figures.