MEPS – HC
PRESCRIBED MEDICINES FILE

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PMED File Structure

- **Each record represents a unique prescribed medicine acquisition (fill or refill) and the characteristics of the drug**

- **File includes medicines prescribed, obtained, and reported**

- **Incorporates data collected in the household and pharmacy components**

Household Component (HC)

- **Medicine name**

- **Number of times acquired in the round**

- **Associated condition(s)**

- **Date first used**

- **Pharmacy information**

Pharmacy Component (PC)

- **Need written permission from the household members**

- **Telephone and mail contact with Pharmacy**

- **Ask for "patient profile" to include:**

  - **Drug name**

  - **National drug code (NDC)**

  - **Drug characteristics**

  - **Date filled**

  - **Payers and amounts of payment**

- **Sample of about 8,000 pharmacies per year**

Editing HC and PC data

- **HC: number of fills**

- **PC**
  - **missing NDC**
  - **missing third-party payer (based on HC)**
  - **missing or unrealistically low or high prices**
  - **missing payments**

Combining HC and PC

- **No common identifier is shared by HC and PC**
- **A code (GPI) is assigned to each HC and PC drug to facilitate matching**
  - **Machine (70%) and human coders (30%) for HC**
  - **NDC (95%) and human coders (5%) for PC**

- **Post-match editing**

- **Utilization based on household data**

- **Payments based almost entirely on pharmacy data**

Drug Characteristics (PC)

Characteristics included for each acquisition:

- Medication name

- National drug code (NDC)

- Quantity dispensed (10, 30, 50, …)

- Form (capsule, tablet, liquid, cream, …)

- Strength (10, 200, …)

- Unit of measurement for form (ounces, …)

- Unit of measurement for strength (mg, ml, …)

Other Variables

Additional information included for each acquisition

- **Round**

- **When the drug was first taken**

- **Type(s) of pharmacy**

- **Condition(s) associated with the drug (by linking with the medical conditions file)**

- **Days supplied (since 2010)**

- **Sources and amounts of payment**

- **Total payment**

Record Identifier Variables

- **RXRECIDX – Uniquely identifies each record on the file**

- **LINKIDX – Drug-round-level ID that can be used to link a PM event to other MEPS event files**

- **DRUGIDX/RXNDC – Drug-level IDs**

Multum Lexicon Variables

- **Each record has 3 types of Multum Lexicon variables**

  - **PREGCAT (pregnancy category)**

  - **TCn (therapeutic class: 1, 2, and 3)**
  - **TCnSn (therapeutic sub-class)**
  - **TCnSn_n (therapeutic sub-sub-class)**

  - **RXDRGNAM (beginning in 2013)**
  - **For 2012 and earlier, RXDRGNAM and corrected TC and PREGCAT variables can be found as an addendum file at the MEPS website (MEPS HC-068: Multum Lexicon Addendum Files to MEPS Prescribed Medicines Files 1996-2013)**

PMED File Peculiarities

- **Meaning of imputation flags is different**
  - **RXFLG**
  - **PCIMPFLG**
  - **IMPFLAG**
  - **INPCFLG**

- **No total charge variable**
  - ► **NO rebate or discount information**

- **No date of service**

Trend Analysis

- **PMED file released yearly beginning in 1996**

- **How will you interpret year-to-year changes?**
  - **Policy change**
  - **Other real change**
  - **Change in MEPS PMED data editing methodology (especially 2007-2008 and 2017)**
  - **MEPS Instrument design change (since Spring of 2018)**

Trend Analysis Caveats

- **Be cautious with the type of comparisons you make before and after 2007 / 2008 and before and after 2017/2018.**

- **Consider techniques to smooth or stabilize trends, such as pooling time periods**

- **Read the documentation for each year of data you are using**

- **Read Methodology Report #29**

Statistical Reports & Applied Research

AHRQ regularly produces and posts findings from the PMED data

- ## Statistical Briefs

  Ding Y, Miller GE. Total Expenses, Total Utilization, and Sources of Payment for Outpatient Prescription Opioids in the U.S. Adult Civilian Noninstitutionalized Population, 2017. Statistical Brief #529. April 2020.

  Carroll WA, Hill SC. Trends in Prescribed Medication Expenditures by Age and Type of Prescription Drug Coverage, 2009 to 2016 MEPS-HC. Statistical Brief #522. May 2019.
  .

- ## Methodology Reports

  Hill SC, Roemer M, Stagnitti MN. Outpatient Prescription Drugs: Data Collection and Editing in the 2011 Medical Expenditure Panel Survey. Methodology Report #29. March 2014.

- ## Working Papers

  Zodet M., Hill S.C., Zuvekas S., Evaluating an Alternative Data Source for Editing MEPS Drug Prices, Working Paper No. 12004, July 2012.

Thank you!

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