

Reflection Week 2

Research Example: <https://academic.oup.com/aje/article/145/2/124/90838> (click PDF to link to full study)

In this study, Bromberger, et al. (1997) used measures of central tendency, in this case the median age at menopause for women in their sample, and compared them across several characteristics to identify factors that predict early onset of menopause for women. For example, Bromberger, et al. found that, when compared to the median age at menopause of 52.5 years for women across the whole sample, the median age at menopause was younger for women who had irregular menstrual cycles, median age of 50.2, smoked, median age of 50.6, were dieting, median age of 50.5, or were African American, median age of 49.3. The authors of the study were further able to identify that African American women in the study who experienced stress in their forties experienced menopause at an even earlier age, 48.4 years (Bromberger, et al. 1997).

The statistical addition of the median is very helpful in this case because it allows researchers to identify factors that might predict early menopause for women. As Bromberger, et al. (1997) write, “Results suggest that premenopausal women in their forties who are experiencing irregular menstrual cycles, are smokers, are dieting, or are African-American are likely to reach menopause earlier than their contemporaries. African-American women may have a different ‘biological clock’ than white women, especially when under stress.” Identifying these factors is important because “an early natural menopause increases the length of a woman’s exposure to risk factors for diseases related to decreased estrogen levels...and may increase the risk of earlier mortality” (Bromberger, et al. 1997). Therefore, the statistic helps bring about an understanding of the factors that predict early menopause for women. In turn, this allows doctors to better identify prevention plans and treat women with these factors, helps women with these

factors to better advocate for themselves within the healthcare system, and researchers to conduct further studies on mitigating the effects of early menopause for women with these factors.

Popular Press Example: <https://www.thebalance.com/what-is-the-average-age-of-marriage-in-the-u-s-4685727>

In this article, author Rebecca Lake uses a measure of central tendency, the median age of men and women when they get married for the first time. She describes the increase in both men and women's median age at their first marriage over time and notes that women and men's median age at first marriage is becoming more similar; that is, the gap between the median ages is closing.

However, the statistical addition to the article is neither helpful nor a hindrance. Rebecca Lake uses the rest of the article to talk about the financial benefits and drawbacks to getting married. She mentions that "you can use the average age of marriage as a guideline" (Lake 2020) for when to get married, and implies that couples should take into account their age when discusses their financial goals and futures. However, Lake never quite makes the connection between the age at which one gets married and financial benefits or drawbacks, apart from saying, "having an ongoing conversation about your finances can help you decide whether it makes sense to get married while you're younger or wait a little while until your finances have improved" (Lake 2020). Certainly, the connection between the median age at marriage and any financial benefit or drawback is never made or discussed further. It would have been more beneficial if Lake cited the increase in median age at marriage to draw a clearer connection to a financial benefit. For example, it would be helpful to cite a study, if such a study exists, that compared the finances of those who married at an earlier age with those who married at a later age. As the article is currently written, however, I don't see the need to even mention the median

age at marriage, nor it's increase over the years. The article stands fine without the statistic as an advice piece on considerations to make regarding finances when thinking about marriage.

SAMPLE