

Description of Healthcare Service Data

A sample of 4406 cases was obtained from the National Medical Expenditure Survey conducted in 1987 and 1988 (NMES). The data provide a comprehensive picture of how Americans use and pay for health services. Here only one of these six measures, that deal with the office visits to physicians (OFP), is considered. A feature of these data is that they do not include a high proportion of zero counts but do reflect a high degree of unconditional overdispersion.

The NMES is based on a representative, national probability sample of the civilian, noninstitutionalized population and individuals admitted to long-term care facilities during 1987. Under the household survey of the NMES, more than 38,000 individuals in 15,000 households across the United States were interviewed quarterly about their health insurance coverage, the services they used, and the cost and source of payments of those services. In addition to healthcare data, NMES provides information on health status, employment, sociodemographic characteristics, and economic status.

Variable	Definition	Mean	Standard deviation
<i>OFP</i>	Number of physician office visits	5.77	6.76
<i>OFNP</i>	Number of nonphysician office visits	1.62	5.32
<i>OPP</i>	Number of physician outpatient visits	0.75	3.65
<i>OPNP</i>	Number of nonphysician outpatient visits	0.54	3.88
<i>EMR</i>	Number of emergency room visits	0.26	0.70
<i>HOSP</i>	Number of hospitalizations	0.30	0.75
<i>EXCLHLTH</i>	Equals 1 if self-perceived health is excellent	0.08	0.27
<i>POORHLTH</i>	Equals 1 if self-perceived health is poor	0.13	0.33
<i>NUMCHRON</i>	Number of chronic conditions	1.54	1.35
<i>ADLDIFF</i>	Equals 1 if the person has a condition that limits activities of daily living	0.20	0.40
<i>NOREAST</i>	Equals 1 if the person lives in northeastern U.S.	0.19	0.39
<i>MIDWEST</i>	Equals 1 if the person lives in the midwestern U.S.	0.26	0.44
<i>WEST</i>	Equals 1 if the person lives in the western U.S.	0.18	0.39
<i>AGE</i>	Age in years (divided by 10)	7.40	0.63
<i>BLACK</i>	Equals 1 if the person is African-American	0.12	0.32
<i>MALE</i>	Equals 1 if the person is male	0.40	0.49
<i>MARRIED</i>	Equals 1 if the person is married	0.55	0.50
<i>SCHOOL</i>	Number of years of education	10.30	3.74
<i>FAMINC</i>	Equals family income in \$10,000	2.53	2.92
<i>EMPLOYED</i>	Equals 1 if the person is employed	0.10	0.30
<i>PRIVINS</i>	Equals 1 if the person is covered by private health insurance	0.78	0.42
<i>MEDICAID</i>	Equals 1 if the person is covered by Medicaid	0.09	0.29