WSS NEWS

WASHINGTON STATISTICAL SOCIETY

IN THIS ISSUE

SEMINARS

Title: **Non-probability Samples**

Dates/Time: **September 9, 2015**
12:30– 3:30 pm

Moderator: Don Jang, Mathematica Policy Research

Sponsor: Methodology Section

Location: Offices of Mathematica-MPR 1100 1st Street NE, 12th Floor, Washington DC 20002. Once in the building, inform the receptionist at the first floor lobby that you are visiting Mathematica for a WSS seminar. Then, take the elevators to the 12th floor and tell the Mathematica receptionist that you are attending the WSS seminar. Please call Mathematica's main office number (202 484-9220), if you have trouble finding the building.

By Metro: Take the Red Line to either the NoMa-Gallaudet U (used to be called New York Ave) Station or Union Station. From the NoMa-Gallaudet U Station, follow signs to exit at M Street. Then walk 1 block west on M street and 2 blocks south on 1st Street NE (the building will be on your right). From Union Station, walk north along 1st Street NE for about 4-5 blocks until you reach L Street (the building will be on your left after crossing L street).

By Car: Pay parking is available in the building parking garage, which is located 1 block east of North Capitol on L Street NE.

Guest List: To be placed on the attendance list for webinar, please RSVP to Alyssa Maccarone at amaccarone@mathematica-mpr.com or (202) 250-3570 at least 2 days in advance of the conference. Provide your name, affiliation, and contact information (e-mail is preferred). Once on the attendance list, you will be provided with information about webinar.

Schedule:

Time	Speaker	Affiliation	Point of Contact
12:30	Mike Fleming	WSS	charles.fleming@bhox.com
12:35	Don Jang	MPR	DJang@Mathematica-Mpr.com
12:40	Mike Brick	Westat	mikebrick@westat.com
1:05	Michael Sinclair	MPR	MSinclair@mathematica-mpr.com
1:30	Jill A. Dever	RTI International	jdever@rti.org
2:00	Intermission		
2:15	Scott Keeter	Pew Research Center	SKeeter@PewResearch.org
2:40	Richard Valliant	Universities of Michigan and Maryland	rvallian@umd.edu

Abstract: This Washington Statistical Society conference on non-probability samples follows upon the 2014 WSS President's Invited Lecture given by Mike Brick who discussed the findings of the American Association for Public Opinion Research (AAPOR) task force on conditions under which survey designs that do not use probability samples might still be useful for making inferences to a larger population. The speakers of this conference will discuss applications of using non-probability samples and their implications.

Non-Probability Sampling Assumptions and Methods

Non-probability sampling must rely on modeling to make inference because design-based theory is impossible without known selection probabilities. The typical opt-in, non-probability survey applies weights to the sample observations in ways that mimic methods from probability samples. This weighting process implies a set of assumptions about the distributions of the variables and the selection mechanisms. In this talk, we begin by reviewing some of these weighting methods and the implied or explicit model assumptions. Next, we discuss whether some of the lessons learned from probability sample designs can be employed to improve the accuracy of non-probability samples.

~ Mike Brick
Vice President and co-Director of the Survey Methods Unit at Westat

Non-Probability Samples and Panel Surveys: A look at Two Strategies for Blending Panel Surveys with Traditional Probability Samples

With increasing survey costs, reduced participation rates, and a greater need for timely and domain specific estimates to inform treatment and policy decisions, interest has grown in the use of panel surveys and other forms of extant data to augment traditional survey methods. Likewise, while the direct use of panel surveys and nonprobability based samples have been widely accepted for polling and marketing research studies, the authors suspect that a broader array of researchers may begin to look at methods to answer questions where traditional survey methods are dominant. Given concerns with the representative nature of panel data, researchers may require some form of validation provided by an independent and smaller probability based data collection. To cover both of these situations, we present two approaches for blending data from panel or non-probability sample collections with probability samples. The first approach is based on the work of Valliant, Dorfman and Royall (2000) coupled with the use of a composite estimator that we suggest may be most useful when a traditional probability based survey data collection is used to validate a larger panel study. The second approach explores the use of a matching process based on Guo and Fraser (2010) to supplement a traditional survey with panel survey data to produce estimates for smaller geographical area, for cases with rare characteristics or to create survey estimates between study cycles to generate more timely information. We will also explore the use of Bayesian statistical methods to capture the variability in the blending procedures based in part on the work of Zheng and Little (2003) and Zangeneh and Little (2012).

~ Michael Sinclair
Senior Fellow at Mathematica Policy Research

Can Estimated-Control Calibration Reduce Bias in Estimates from Nonprobability Samples?

Nonprobability (or design-free) surveys are becoming more prevalent because they offer both increased speed in obtaining data on emerging issues (e.g., an opt-in web survey) and decreased costs compared with probability-based surveys. However, evaluation studies have shown that many nonprobability estimates are biased because of errors associated with coverage, selection, and model misspecification.

Calibrating design-based survey weights to control totals estimated from other surveys has been implemented for years. Referred to as estimated control (EC) calibration, this technique has been shown to reduce bias for design-based estimates beyond levels seen when calibrating to typical controls alone (e.g., demographic characteristics, geographic location). By comparison, propensity score adjustments (PSA) are used to calculate estimates from nonprobability surveys, and may include questionnaire items (e.g., webographic questions) as logistic model covariates. However, research to date on PSA shows mixed results with bias reduction.

This presentation begins with a brief background on PSA and EC calibration techniques. Next, results are discussed from an empirical study to compare bias reduction obtained from the two methods for nonprobability samples. The presentation concludes with future research.

~ Jill A. Dever
Senior Survey Statistician, RTI International

An Exploration of Threats to Inference with Nonprobability Samples: Bias, Homogeneity, Both or Neither?

Aside from coverage problems, online panels based on nonprobability samples may suffer from large but unknown biases in the types of internet users who participate. These samples may be significantly less diverse than in a typical random sample of the public. This presentation will compare probability samples and nonprobability samples from several vendors, focusing on both the comparison of probability versus nonprobability samples and the differences among the nonprobability samples on a set of variables that may be related to the propensity to take part in a survey. Among the topics addressed will be the impact of adjustments and weighting on the bias including relationships among variables and subgroups and the effective sample size relative to the cost per interview.

~ Scott Keeter
Director of Survey Research, Pew Research Center

Inferential Problems with Nonprobability Samples

This talk will briefly review some of the basic issues in making inferences to populations using samples where the investigator has limited control over which units appear in the sample. Repeated sampling (design-based) inference cannot be used, so if estimators have any justification, it must be model-based. Finding a model(s) that can be used to project a sample to a population is, thus, the critical step. Approaches that have been proposed are (1) use of models to calculate of pseudo inclusion probabilities to use in quasi-randomization inference, (2) projection using population structural models for analysis variables, and (3) combinations of (1) and (2). Combining probability samples (reference surveys) with nonprobability samples is one line of attack for (1). Calibration estimation (e.g., raking or poststratification) has been used for (2). Validating the models and the procedures used by different organizations is difficult. Some options for testing the methods will be discussed.

~ Richard Valliant
Research Professor, Universities of Michigan and Maryland

Title: **Weather-Adjusting Employment Data**

Date/Time: **September 23' 2015**
10:30 am– 12:00 pm

Speaker: Jonathan H. Wright, Johns Hopkins University

Author: Michael Boldin, Federal Reserve Bank of Philadelphia, Jonathan H. Wright

Discussant: William R. Bell, Census Bureau

Chair: Richard Tiller, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Sponsor: Methodology Section

Location: Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center

To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, you need to e-mail your name, affiliation, and seminar name to wss_seminar@bls.gov (underscore after 'wss') by noon at least 2 days in advance of the seminar, or call 202-691-7524 and leave a message. Bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station.

Abstract: This paper proposes and implements a statistical methodology for adjusting employment data for the effects of deviation in weather from seasonal norms. This is distinct from seasonal adjustment, which only controls for the normal variation in weather across the year. Unusual weather can distort both the data and the seasonal factors. We control for both of these effects by integrating a weather adjustment step in the seasonal adjustment process. We use several indicators of weather, including temperature, snowfall and hurricanes. Weather effects can be very important, shifting the monthly payrolls change number by more than 100,000 in either direction. The effects are largest in the winter and early spring months and in the construction sector.

POC: evans.thomas@bls.gov

Title: **LGBT Population Measurement Issues**

Dates/Time: **October 6, 2015**
1:00– 4:00 pm

Moderator: Carl Ramirez, GAO

Discussant: Nancy A. Bates, Census

Sponsor: DC-AAPOR and WSS Methodology Section

Location: To be placed on the seminar attendance list at the Bureau of Labor Statistics, or to attend online, you need to pre-register (free) at https://www.eventbrite.com/e/lgbt-population-measurement-issues-a-seminar-tickets-17535613492 by noon at least two days in advance of the seminar." Please bring a photo ID to the seminar. BLS is located at 2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE. Use the Red Line to Union Station. Parking in the area of BLS is available at Union Station. For parking information see http://www.unionstationdc.com/parking. No validation is available from BLS for reduced parking rates.

WebEX: WebEx event address for attendees:
https://dol.webex.com/dol/j.php?MTID=m039de663e8d7a3d069e14fc1673c80b1

Audio: Call-in toll-free number (Verizon): 1-866-747-9048 (US)
Call-in number (Verizon): 1-517-233-2139
(US) Attendee access code: 938 454 2
Note: Particular computer configurations might not be compatible with WebEx.

Schedule/Abstracts:

Time	Speaker	Affiliation	Point of Contact
1:00	Carl Ramirez	GAO	ramirezc@gao.gov
1:10	Samuel C. "Chris" Haffer	CMS	chris.haffer@cms.hhs.gov
1:35	Benjamin Cerf Harris	Census	benjamin.c.harris@census.gov
2:00	Intermission		
2:15	Paul Guerino	CMS	paul.guerino@cms.hhs.gov
2:40	David Dean Jr.	SAMHSA	chipper.dean@samhsa.hhs.gov
3:05	Nancy A. Bates	Census	nancy.a.bates@census.gov
3:20	Questions and Answers		

Using Health Care Claims Data to Identify the Transgender Population in the Medicare Program

Medicare beneficiaries who are transgender are members of a vulnerable population with well-documented disparities in the health care setting who have been historically invisible in CMS data. Recent research conducted at the Department of Veterans Affairs suggests the potential for using health care administrative data to identify persons who are transgender. Expanding on this work we explore our ability to use Medicare provider billing data to identify and describe Medicare beneficiaries who are transgender. Using a combination of claims information, including diagnosis codes, claims history, billing modifiers, and prescription drug data, we analyze 100% of the CMS Fee-For-Service (FFS) "final action" claims from both institutional and non-institutional providers for CY 2013 (N=1 billion claims) to identify individuals who were seeking transgender-related services. We identified 3,194 persons as transgender Medicare beneficiaries in 2013. These classification methods were highly accurate, with 87.32%, or 2,789 persons, having enough information in their claims history to validate the classification. The majority of transgender Medicare beneficiaries was disabled under age 65, of every race, in each state, and suffers disproportionately from depression, hyperlipidemia and hypertension. Our work demonstrates that administrative data is a valuable resource for identifying the medically transitioning transgender population and that using ICD-9 codes and billing modifiers is a valid and replicable method that is relevant to many data systems. By replicating the methods outlined in this analysis, researchers can estimate the size of the transgender population and use this data to further analyze health disparities and outcomes in the transgender community.

~ Samuel C. "Chris" Haffer, Ph.D., Director, Data and Policy Analytics Group, Office of Minority Health. U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Likely Transgender Individuals in Federal Administrative Records and the 2010 Census

This paper utilizes changes to individuals' first names and sex-coding in files from the Social Security Administration (SSA) to identify people likely to be transgender. I first document trends in these transgender-consistent changes and compare them to trends in other types of changes to personal information. I find that transgender-consistent changes are present as early as 1936 and have grown with non-transgender consistent changes. Of the likely transgender individuals alive during 2010, the majority change their names but not their sex-coding. Of those who changed both their names and their sex-coding, most change both pieces of information concurrently, although over a quarter change their name first and their sex-coding 5-6 years later. Linking individuals to their 2010 Census responses shows my approach identifies more transgender members of racial and ethnic minority groups than other studies using, for example, anonymous online surveys. In addition, likely transgender individuals in the SSA data are more likely than non-transgender individuals to leave the Census question on sex blank or to check both "M" and "F". Finally, states with the highest proportion of likely transgender residents have state-wide laws prohibiting discrimination on the basis of gender identity or expression. States with the lowest proportion do not.

~ Benjamin Cerf Harris, Ph.D., U.S. Census Bureau

Including Sexual Orientation and Gender Minority Status on the Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey

The Medicare Current Beneficiary Survey (MCBS) is the most comprehensive and complete survey available on the Medicare population and is essential in capturing data not otherwise collected through CMS operations and administration. The MCBS collects information that plays a critical role in the monitoring and evaluation of key provisions of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), such as analyzing and monitoring trends in health disparities. In response to Federal initiatives to enhance the collection and reporting of key demographic data, the MCBS is undergoing several enhancements to more accurately capture demographic information and be consistent with standards set for HHS sponsored population based health surveys. This includes the potential of adding new items on sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). This presentation will discuss the process used to determine the proposed MCBS SOGI items, as well as the results of cognitive interviews performed on the MCBS population.

~ Paul Guerino, Social Science Research Analyst, Office of Enterprise Data and Analytics, U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services

Substance Use and Mental Health of Same-sex Couples Residing Together: Results from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH)

In this study, researchers from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) identify same-sex households using household roster data from the 2008-2013 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) and discuss analysis on the substance use and mental health (i.e. behavioral health) of same-sex couples residing together. First, in order to evaluate the quality of the NSDUH estimates of same-sex households, we benchmarked our findings against the American Community Survey and the General Social Survey. Given the comparability, we then compared same-sex households to different-sex households and found that many key behavioral health estimates appear to be different between same- and different-sex couples. Same-sex couples are more likely to experience severe behavioral health issues than different-sex couples, including serious mental illness (respectively 6.5 vs. 2.9%, $p < .01$) and substance use disorder (14.8 vs. 7.6%, $p < .0001$) in the past year. They are also more likely to experience major depressive episode (11.1 vs 5.4%, $p < .0001$) and serious psychological distress (14.7 vs. 18.2, $p < .0001$) in the past year. Though no different in past month heavy drinking, same-sex couples are more likely than different-sex couples to use cigarettes (29.6 vs. 19.3%, $p < .0001$), marijuana (13.4 vs. 5.8%, $p < .0001$), and illicit drugs (19.2 vs. 7.4%, $p < .0001$) in the past month. We conclude by discussing the public health implications of these findings, given the prior literature on LGBTQ behavioral health disparities, and potential opportunities for research on same-sex couples' behavioral health.

~ David "Chipper" Dean Jr., Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

CONFERENCE

FFC/2015: The 21st Federal Forecasters Conference

Date: **September 24, 2015**

Location: **Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference and Training Center**
2 Massachusetts Avenue, NE
Washington, DC 20212

Check-In: 8:00 am - 9:00 am

Schedule: 9:00 am - 4:15 pm
(Plenary and concurrent session schedule to follow)

Register Deadline: **September 10, 2015 a**
www.21st-ffc-2015.eventbrite.com
There is no charge for participation

Theme: Are Forecasts Accurate? Does it Matter?

Forecasts typically undergo a review before they are released to judge whether or not the forecast adheres to commonly accepted technical practice. Forecasts often face an ex post evaluation that focuses on realized accuracy. Whether forecasting immigration or emigration, agricultural production and price, mineral reserves and prices, or forecasting the direction of labor, economic, education, energy, and revenue trends, forecasters face similar private and public scrutiny. How are forecasts evaluated? How is forecast accuracy judged? How does the accuracy of forecasts affect users? Add your voice to the discussion. Join us at the 21st Federal Forecasters Conference, where these and other forecasting questions will be addressed.

SPOTLIGHT A WSS MEMBER!

Washington Statistical Society's Spotlight on Members Program

The WSS Board of Directors has established a program to highlight members who have made or are making notable contributions to the work of their organization or their professional field of expertise. We know that WSS members are doing interesting work in the fields of statistics, survey methodology, and the social sciences. Through this program, we hope to spotlight the accomplishments of our fellow WSS members.

This is our first request for nominations, to be featured in an upcoming issue of WSS News. We are interested in featuring members at all levels of the employment spectrum including recent graduates, mid-career employees, and those seasoned veterans.

Please feel free to nominate more than one person or a team working together. You may also nominate yourself as well. The nominees must be members of the WSS and not currently affiliated with the Board.

Please provide us with the following information about your nominee or nominees.

1. Your name, email address, and telephone number
2. Name or names of nominee(s)
3. Organizational affiliation
4. Job title
5. Their contact information including email address and telephone number
6. A brief narrative describing the reasons for your nomination
7. A photo of the nominee, although not required, would be great be greatly appreciated

Please submit your nominations or direct any questions to, John Finamore (jfinamore@nsf.gov), member of the WSS Board.

We look forward to hearing from you.

COURSES & WORKSHOPS

Practical Tools for Nonresponse Bias Studies
SEPTEMBER 18, 2015
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212
Presented by Jill Montaquila and Kristen Olson
Registration and Payment Due by September 4, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=091815

Statistical Analysis with Missing Data
NOVEMBER 5-6, 2015
College Park Marriott Hotel and Conference Center, East Hyattsville, MD
Presented by Roderick Little and Trivellore E. Raghunathan
Registration and Payment Due by October 22, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=110515

Introduction to Survey Sampling
DECEMBER 7-8, 2015
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212
Presented by Colm O'Muircheartaigh and James M. Lepkowski
Registration and Payment Due by November 23, 2015
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=120715

Writing Questions for Surveys
MARCH 10-11, 2016
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212
Presented by Nora Cate Schaeffer
Registration and Payment Due by February 25, 2016
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=031016

Introduction to Survey Estimation
MAY 2-3, 2016
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212
Presented by David Morganstein and Sunghee Lee
Registration and Payment Due by April 18, 2016
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=050216

Experimental Design for Surveys
JANUARY 21-22, 2016
Bureau of Labor Statistics Conference Center, Washington DC 20212
Presented by Roger Tourangeau
Registration and Payment Due by January 7, 2016
https://projects.isr.umich.edu/jpsm/html_content.cfm?CourseID=012116

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

Business Operations Analyst position with Navy Federal Credit Union
Vienna, VA
Job Opening ID: 25937

Position Description

Navy Federal Credit Union's Consumer Loan / Credit Card Lending Analytics team has 1 opening for a Business Operations Analyst in Vienna, VA. The position requires understanding the business needs of our internal clients, translating them into the appropriate data analysis and predictive models, and providing recommendations that facilitate decision making. The analyst will work on a variety of projects such as segmentation strategies, time series analysis, forecasting, and optimization. This position will frequently interact with senior management and is in a fast paced and collaborative environment.

Required

- Bachelor's or advanced degree in Economics, Statistics, Computer Science, or other quantitative field
- Knowledge of data analysis and statistical methods, including hypothesis testing and regression models
- Proficiency in MS Office (Excel, PowerPoint, Word)
- Solid written and verbal communication skills
- Experience in the lending industry is a plus
- Experience working with large datasets and SQL/VBA/SAS/R or similar programming experience is a plus
- Must be authorized to work in the US

Navy Federal Credit Union

Navy Federal Credit Union is the world's largest credit union with over $66 billion in assets and more than 5 million members. Navy Federal offers a career, not just a job. Our employee total rewards package includes competitive salaries, incentive programs, comprehensive medical/dental/vision benefits, retirement plans with employer match, award-winning training programs, professional development programs, tuition assistance, paid leave and work/life programs. Navy Federal was named one of FORTUNE Magazine's "100 Best Companies To Work For" in 2015.

To Apply: Visit https://www.navyfederal.org/about/careers.php for more information on Navy Federal Credit Union. Interested candidates may contact Vivienne Thairu at vivienne_thairu@navyfederal.org by July 5, 2015.

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FROM THE WSS NEWS EDITOR

Items for publication in the **August, 2015** issue of WSS NEWS will be accepted thru the **20th** of **preceding month**.

Email items to wss.editor@gmail.com.

The authors are responsible for verifying the contents of their submissions. Submissions requiring extensive revisions on length and/or contents will be returned.

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