The Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP)

* Using Topical Modules

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Topical Modules: An Intro

- Most SIPP waves include extra topical modules with an additional bundle of questions
- Some of these topical modules are widely used:
  - Adult Well-Being/Material Hardship measures are considered the best available by many
  - Asset and liabilities data are considered very strong
- Some have hardly/never been used
  - The reliability of these measures may or may not have been validated
  - If you enter the wild west of an uncharted topical module (TM), look for ways to benchmark your estimates

Topical Modules: An Intro

- The schedule of these topical modules is available here:
  - http://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/sipp/tech-documentation/topical-modules.html
- Topical modules come in a separate file, but take the same form as core wave files: person-month form
- Often TM measures are at the household level (such as assets/ material hardship), but the variables are duplicated in each household member's record
- In some cases, the universe of the TM excludes some SIPP respondents
- You can merge topical module (TM) variables into your core files using the person identifier and wave
- TM observations generally attach to the 4th reference month of the wave they were conducted in
- While they attach to this observation, TM questions vary considerably in terms of the reference period they cover

Merging Topical Modules

Person	Wave	Ref Month	Work	Insured
Luke	4	1	0	0
Luke	4	2	0	0
Luke	4	3	1	0
Luke	4	4	1	1
LeBron	4	1	1	1
LeBron	4	2	1	1
LeBron	4	3	1	1
LeBron	4	4	1	1

----------Core----------

Person	Wave	Net Worth
Luke	4	A little
LeBron	4	A lot

---------Topical Module---------

Merging Topical Modules

Person	Wave	Ref Month	Work	Insured	Net Worth
Luke	4	1	0	0	.
Luke	4	2	0	0	.
Luke	4	3	1	0	.
Luke	4	4	1	1	A little
LeBron	4	1	1	1	.
LeBron	4	2	1	1	.
LeBron	4	3	1	1	.
LeBron	4	4	1	1	A lot

Person	Wave	Net Worth
Luke	4	A little
LeBron	4	A lot

Must create a variable for the reference month and set it equal to 4

```
gen srefmon = 4
```

STATA SYNTAX
(After generating a variable srefmon == 4 in the TM file. Also, make sure epppnum is in the right units!) Now load in your core data

```
Merge 1:1 ssuid epppnum swave srefmon using sipp08t4.dta,
keepusing(networth)
```

Merging Topical Modules

Person	Wave	Ref Month	Work	Insured
Luke	4	1	0	0
Luke	4	2	0	0
Luke	4	3	1	0
Luke	4	4	1	1
LeBron	4	1	1	1
LeBron	4	2	1	1
LeBron	4	3	1	1
LeBron	4	4	1	1

Person	Wave	Citizen
Luke	4	1
LeBron	4	1

Merging Topical Modules

Person	Wave	Ref Month	Work	Insured	Citizen
Luke	4	1	0	0	1
Luke	4	2	0	0	1
Luke	4	3	1	0	1
Luke	4	4	1	1	1
LeBron	4	1	1	1	1
LeBron	4	2	1	1	1
LeBron	4	3	1	1	1
LeBron	4	4	1	1	1

Person	Wave	Citizen
Luke	4	1
LeBron	4	1

STATA SYNTAX

```
Merge m:1 ssuid epppnum swave using sipp08t4.dta, keepusing(citizen)
```

Merging Topical Modules

Person	Wave	Ref Month	Work	Insured
Luke	4	1	0	0
Luke	4	2	0	0
Luke	4	3	1	0
Luke	4	4	1	1
LeBron	4	1	1	1
LeBron	4	2	1	1
LeBron	4	3	1	1
LeBron	4	4	1	1

Person	Wave	Food Secure
Luke	4	1
LeBron	4	1

Merging Topical Modules

Person	Wave	Ref Month	Work	Insured	Food Secure
Luke	4	1	0	0	.
Luke	4	2	0	0	.
Luke	4	3	1	0	.
Luke	4	4	1	1	1
LeBron	4	1	1	1	.
LeBron	4	2	1	1	.
LeBron	4	3	1	1	.
LeBron	4	4	1	1	1

Person	Wave	Food Secure
Luke	4	1
LeBron	4	1

The SIPP's food security questions have a four-month reference period, so they can be thought of as pertaining to the 4 months of the partner wave

STATA SYNTAX

```
Merge 1:1 ssuid epppnum swave srefmon using sipp08t4.dta,
keepusing(foodsecure)
```

Food Security in the SIPP

In the SIPP, a household is defined as being *food insecure* if they report at least two of the following, in reference to the previous 4 months (Nord, 2006). They are considered to have very low food security if they report at least 4.

- **EAFLAST:** The food the household bought didn't last and they didn't have money to get more (answers "often" or "sometimes").
- **EAFBALN:** The household couldn't afford to eat balanced meals (answers "often" or "sometimes").
- **EAFSKIP:** The adults in the household ever cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there wasn't enough money for food (answer "yes").
- **EAFLESS:** The adults in the household ever ate less than they felt they should because there wasn't enough money to buy food (answer "yes").
- **EAFDAY:** The adults in the household ever did not eat for a whole day because there wasn't enough money for food (answer "yes").

Table 1: Sample means, Households with Children

Characteristics	> 150% poverty	<= 150% of poverty		
		All	Non-SNAP	SNAP
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Observations	24,347	8,027	4,948	3,079
Material Hardship characteristics				
Food Hardship				
Food Insecurity in past four months	0.062	0.261	0.214	0.345
Non-Food Hardship				
Problem meeting essential expenses	0.134	0.365	0.297	0.487
Did not pay full rent	0.053	0.177	0.142	0.240
Did not pay full gas, oil, or electricity bills	0.095	0.277	0.214	0.389
Did not go to the doctor because of cost	0.052	0.139	0.133	0.150

Shaefer & Gutierrez, 2013

Table 3: Average Causal Effect of SNAP Participation on Material Hardships

	Bivariate Normal Results			
	With Instruments		Without Instruments	
	percentage points	percentage change	percentage points	percentage change
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Food Hardship				
(1) Food Insecurity	-0.130**	-0.417***	-0.139***	-0.437***
	[0.051]	[0.140]	[0.045]	[0.115]
Non-Food Hardship				
(2) Problem meeting essential expenses	-0.288***	-0.601***	-0.339***	-0.668***
	[0.081]	[0.132]	[0.056]	[0.082]
(3) Did not pay full rent	-0.074**	-0.357***	-0.094***	-0.430***
	[0.030]	[0.121]	[0.029]	[0.100]
(4) Did not pay full gas/oil/electricity bills	-0.157***	-0.468***	-0.197***	-0.549***
	[0.061]	[0.146]	[0.057]	[0.121]
(5) Did not go to the doctor because of cost	-0.085**	-0.473**	-0.092**	-0.502***
	[0.041]	[0.193]	[0.040]	[0.180]

Source: Authors' analyses of a pooled sample from the 1996-2004 panels of the SIPP
Notes: All estimations include state dummies, year dummies and calendar month dummies. Standard err
within each state.
*** p-value<0.01, ** p-value<0.05, * p-value<0.1

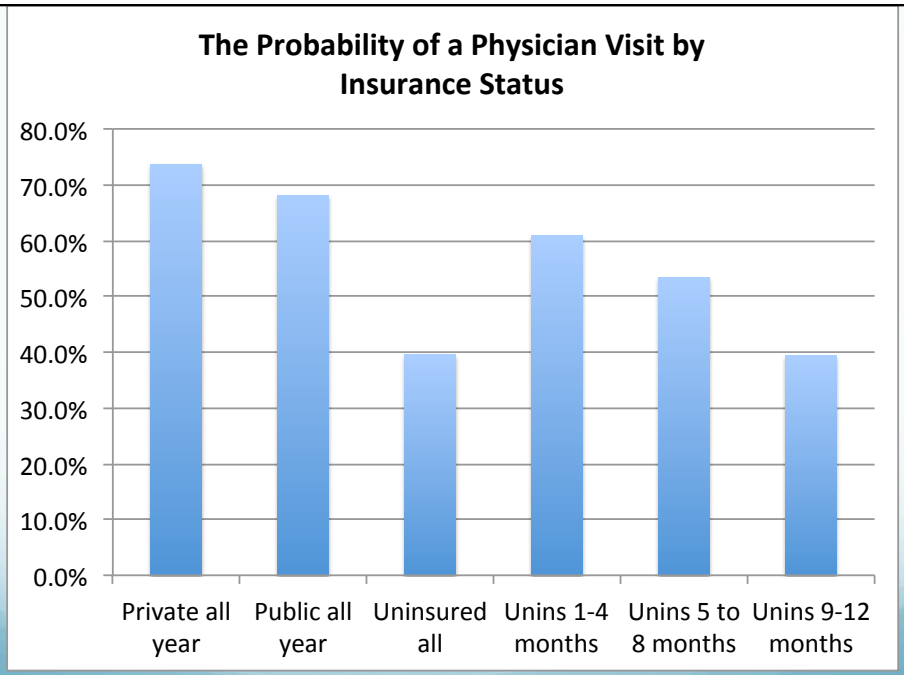
Shaefer & Gutierrez, 2013

Good Resource on Assets and Liabilities Data

Czajka, J. L., Jacobson, J. E., & Cody, S. (2003). Survey estimates of wealth: A comparative analysis and review of the survey of income and program participation. Washington, DC: Mathematica Policy Research.

Available at www.ssa.gov/policy/docs/contractreports/SurveyEstimatesWealth.pdf.

- SIPP has lower estimates of aggregate wealth and net worth. This appears to be related to:
  - Underestimation of assets of the wealthy (as with income)—this accounts for 72% of the difference
  - Assets not measured by the SIPP
  - Other
- SIPP is MUCH better at estimating liabilities
- Measures of the value of family's own home are very strong
- Good at measuring the value of cars



Based on Buchmueller, Orzel & Shore-Sheppard, 2014