Student Exercise: Poverty Status, Race/Ethnicity, Gender, and Disability among the Elderly

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Summary:

A primary goal of long term care delivery systems is to assist aged individuals with functional needs. Therefore, the need and type of long term care will be influenced by the functional disability of the population served. Functional disability in terms of mobility, self-care, and work limitations is influenced by social characteristics. This module introduces students to the relationships between age, race/ethnicity, gender, poverty, and disability. It also provides students with an opportunity to use census data to gather information about a target population.

Learning Goals:

Skill:

-Learn about survey methods and the availability of census data

-Learn how to construct and interpret bivariate tables

-Understand the importance of using data to support conclusions

-Develop the ability to relate findings to the implications they may have on long term care delivery systems.

Substance:

-Examine the influence of economic condition on disability and self care.

-Examine the influence of intrinsic characteristics such as ethnicity, age and gender on poverty, disability and self care.

-Examine the relationships between poverty, mobility limitations and work limitations, and describe the effect this could have on the lives of impoverished elders.

Context for Use

This module is designed for use in a undergraduate college classroom. Basic computer skills are necessary, however students of all levels can succeed with instructor guidance. This activity could be used either as a self-directed student activity or as a supplement to classroom lecture material.

Activity: This activity is divided into 3 portions. First, I provide the research questions that guide data analysis. Second, I list the steps to complete the activity. Third, there are a series of questions you will need to answer and turn in for credit. You will be able to answer all of the assigned questions by following the steps as I have listed them. Do not be frightened by the number of steps; the activity is actually relatively simple. I have listed each step separately to make things easier for students.

Research Questions: Through completing this activity you will find answers to the following research questions:

1. Does race influence poverty status among the elderly?

2. Does gender influence poverty status among the elderly?

3. Does race influence disability in terms of mobility limitations?

4. Does gender influence disability in terms of mobility limitations?

5. Does poverty influence disability in terms of mobility limitations?

6. Do mobility limitations influence self care?

7. Do gender and poverty work together to influence self care?

8. Does gender influence the relationship between mobility limitations and work limitations?

Steps to Complete Activity:

1. Go to the Social Science Data Analysis Network website: www.ssdan.net

2. Under to heading "Census in the Classroom" click on the "Data Counts!" link.

3. Click on the "Data" tab.

4. For this project we will be using a subset of 2000 US Census data. To access this dataset from the Data tab, click on “Browse”.

5. A box in the right hand corner provides a drop down menu listing available datasets. Under the command “Choose a Collection or Dataset” select data set “cen2000” and submit.

6. Now you will need to select the subset of the Census data that we will be using to answer our research questions. Again, there is a box in the right hand corner providing a drop down menu of collections or subsets. Under the command “Choose a Collection of Dataset” select “elddsab2K.dat”.

7. This should bring you to a screen to select the data analysis program. You will be creating tables of data using a program named “New WebCHIP 2.0”. Please click on this link to open the program.

8. Now you will see a white screen with a set of commands in the top left hand corner. You will use these commands to display the census data in a way that will help you answer the assigned questions (listed below). First, please click on “Command” to access a menu. From the Command menu, select “Marginals”.

9. The data marginals are similar to what are sometimes called frequencies. They tell you what percentage of the sample responded to each category of each question. Please answer assignment questions 1, 2 & 3.

10. Next, begin to create data tables to answer the next questions. Please return to “Command” in the left hand corner and select “Crosstab” from the list that drops down.

11. A box will pop-up asking you to select a variable for the row of your chart. Please select “RaceLat”. Race will be our independent variable.

12. Next, a box will pop-up asking you to select the variable for the column of your chart. Please select “Pov”. Poverty will be our dependent variable.

13. Go back to the top left hand corner and select Table. Under this link, select “Percent Across”.

14. A table should appear. The cells represent the percentage of each racial category that fits into each economic category. For example, 7.5% of white elders live in poverty. On the bottom, the total row tells you the percentage of the total sample that live in poverty. For example, 9.5% of all elders live in poverty. Please answer assignment questions 4, 5 & 6 addressing the influence of race on poverty among the elderly.

15. You will need to create a new table to address the influence of gender on poverty among the elderly. Please return to “Command” in the top left hand corner, and select “Crosstab” from the drop down list.

16. Select Gender as your row variable. Gender will be the independent variable.

17. Select “Pov” as your column variable. Poverty will be the dependent variable.

18. Go to “Table” in the top left hand corner, and select “Percent Across” from the drop down list.

19. A table should appear. Cells represent the percentage of each gender that lives in each economic category. Please answer assignment question 7.

20. Go back to “Command” in the upper left hand corner, and re-select “Crosstabs”.

21. This time, select RaceLat (race) for the row or independent variable, and select MobLmt (mobility limitations) for the Column or dependent variable.

22. Return to “Table” in the top left hand corner and select “Percent Across”.

23. The “yes” column indicates the percent of persons that have limitations to their mobility for each race category. Please answer assignment questions 8 & 9.

24. Return to “Command” in the top left hand corner and select “Crosstab”.

25. This time, select “Gender” for the row or independent variable, and select MobLmt (mobility limitations) for the Column or dependent variable.

26. Return to “Table” in the top left hand corner and select “Percent Across”.

27. The “yes” column indicates the percentage of persons that have mobility limitations for each gender. Please answer assignment question 10.

28. Return to “Command” in the top left hand corner and select “Crosstab”.

29. Now, select “Pov” (poverty) for the row or independent variable, and select MobLmt (mobility limitations) for the Column or dependent variable.

30. Return to “Table” in the top left hand corner and select “Percent Across”.

31. The “yes” column indicates the percentage of persons that have mobility limitations for each economic class. Please answer assignment question 11.

32. Return to “Command” in the top left hand corner and select “Crosstab”.

33. Now select MobLmt (mobility limitations) as the row or independent variable and SelfCare as the column or dependent variable.

34. Return to “Table” in the top left hand corner and select “Percent Across”.

35. The “yes” column indicates the percentage of person that need assistance with personal cares, or cannot care for themselves without help. The “yes” row indicates the percentage of persons with mobility limitations. Please answer assignment question 12.

36. Return to “Command” in the top left hand corner and select “Crosstab”.

37. Now select Pov (poverty) as the row or independent variable, and SelfCare as the column or dependent variable.

38. Now something new. We want to look at how gender and poverty work together to influence the need for personal assistance. Go to “Table” at the top left hand corner and select “Control” from the drop down menu. Please select “Gender” as the control variable. This will provide separate tables for men and women.

39. Return to “Table” in the top left hand corner and select “Percent Across”.

40. The “yes” column indicates the percentage of persons who need assistance with personal care in each economic class. One table displays men, one displays women. Please answer assignment question 13.

41. Return to “Command” in the top left hand corner and select “Crosstab”.

42. Select MobLmt (mobility limitations) as the row or independent variable, and WrkLmt (work limitations) as the column or dependent variable.

43. Return to “Table” in the top left hand corner and select “Percent Across”.

44. The “yes” column indicates the percentage of persons who have work limitations. The “yes” row indicates the percentage of persons who have mobility limitations. One table displays men, one displays women. Please answer assignment question 14.

Assignment questions to answer and turn into instructor for credit:

1. This data set contains census information for persons aged 65 and above. What percentage of persons over age 65 are female?

2. What percentage of persons over age 65 live in poverty? Live in comfortable economic conditions (comf)?

3. What percentage of persons over age 65 have mobility limitations (moblmt)?

4. What racial group has the highest percentage of elders living in poverty?

5. What racial group has the highest percentage of elders living in comfort (Comf)?

6. Using the Total row, what is the most common economic class among the elderly?

7. Who is more likely to live in poverty, men or women?

8. Do most elderly persons have mobility limitations?

9. Which racial category has the least amount of reported mobility limitations?

10. Do men have more mobility limitations than women?

11. In general, do poorer persons have a higher or lower percentage of mobility limitations?

12. What percentage of persons without mobility limitations need assistance with personal care?

13. Which group has highest percentage of persons needing personal care assistance: comfortable (Comf) men or comfortable (Comf) women?

14. How do mobility limitations influence the ability to work? Is there a big difference between men and women?

15. Think about what you have discovered using census data and provide one implication of these findings in regards to long term care delivery. In other words, how do you think the relationship between age, race/ethnicity, gender, poverty, disability and self care influences how long term care is delivered?