



The Problem, Progress Made and Prospects for the Future: Insights from Linked Data

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Association for Public Policy Analysis
and Management
Washington DC
November 6, 2009

Funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Themes

1. Problem – uncertainty about estimates of coverage and uninsurance undermine usefulness of data
2. Progress made – validation studies reduce uncertainty and increase confidence in use of coverage estimates
3. Prospects for the future

Theme 1: Why it Matters

“Until we can make progress in separating the measurement error from the reality of uninsurance, our policy solutions will continue to be inefficient, and our ability to measure our successes will continue to be limited.” (Czajka and Lewis, 1999)



Theme 2: Reducing Uncertainty Through Validation Studies – Private

Known or Validated* Coverage	Percent Self-Reported Known Coverage	Percent Self-Reported Uninsurance
*Private coverage Hill 2006; Kreider & Hill 2006 ^a	99%	--
*Private and public coverage Hill 2006; Kreider & Hill 2006 ^a	95%	--
Private- MN adults under age 65 Davern et al., 2006 ^b	99.4%	0.3%
Private- MN adults over age 64 Davern et al., 2006 ^b	90.7% (98% report Medicare)	0.5%

* Matching versus experimental study

^a 1996 MEPS-HC and MEPS-IC

^b 2003 Minnesota Adult Tobacco Survey



Theme 2: Reducing Uncertainty Through Validation Studies: Medicaid

Studies and Target Population	Percent Self-Reported Known Coverage	Percent Self-Reported Uninsured	Percentage Point Upward Bias in the Uninsured Rate
Experimental Studies			
Children in MN 1999	79.5%	4.5%	0.2%
Persons in MN 1999	54.0%	4.1%	0.3%
Adults in Blue Cross in MN 2003	84.3%	0.6%	0.0%
Adults in CA 2004	83.1%	10.4%	1.0%
Non-Elderly (<65) Persons in FL 2004	87.0%	4.9%	0.5%
Persons in PA 2004	79.9%	3.4%	0.4%
Persons in MD 2004	87.5%	4.4%	0.6%
Matching Studies			
Adults (age 15-64) in CA (1990-2000)	72.3%	21.7%	
MSIS CPS match (CY2001)	57.1%	17.4%	2.2%
MSIS NHIS match (CY2001)	65.4%	9.8%	1.1%

Theme 3: Directions for Future Research to Increase Confidence in Estimates

Studies speak to the power of linked data
AND the power of collaboration

- Validation of MEPS and ACS
- Measurement
- Unit non-response
- Potential for overcount of Medicaid

Theme 3: Challenges Ahead

- Decide whether inference under uncertainty is possible
- Challenge to researchers: do the rigorous research and go a step further—make it accessible and actionable
- Challenge to policy makers: there are no easy answers and no perfect data—only estimates and cumulative evidence



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