

Malaise

Suggested teaching exercise using the CLOSER training dataset

How do people's early-life circumstances affect their propensity to suffer depression in middle-age?

1. Frequencies and basic statistics

To begin, run some frequency counts of childhood background variables like sex, mother's marital status at birth, father's social class (age 11), whether mother/father stayed on at school after minimum leaving age, and 'general ability test' results at age 11.

For depression in middle-age, start by running frequencies and/or means of the 24-point Malaise inventory variable at age 42.

2. What is the relationship between the Malaise score at age 42 and different childhood characteristics?

Next, try seeing what the mean Malaise score is at age 42 for each category of the childhood background variables. For now, leave out the age 11 general ability test as it has too many values.

Describe the key results. For example, how do men and women differ in their Malaise scores? How does the score relate to social class?

3. Construct a derived variable grouping cohort members into quintiles based on their 'general ability test' results at age 11. How does this variable relate to the Malaise score at age 42?

What is the mean Malaise score at age 42 for each of those five quintiles?

4. Now use multivariate regression to see which of the different characteristics you have examined is 'driving' Malaise scores at age 42.

First, do a 'stepwise' regression with Age 42 Malaise as the dependent variable, with the independent variables being sex, mother's marital status at birth, father's social class (age 11), and whether mother/father stayed on at school after minimum leaving age (leave out age 11 general ability test results for now).

Then introduce to the regression model the results of the cognitive test at age 11 (along with all the other variables). What can you conclude?