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SOEP Survey Papers
Series D – Variable Descriptions and Coding

SOEP-Core v41 – HEALTH: Data on Health Indicators

Daniel Graeber, Markus Grabka and SOEP Group

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SOEP-Core v41 – HEALTH: Data on Health Indicators

Daniel Graeber, Markus Grabka and SOEP Group

2026

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1 General Information

Starting in 2002 the SOEP health module in the individual questionnaire has been revised and put into a two year replication period. In the HEALTH-File users find the generated SF-12-Variables and variables on height and weight with imputation flags and a user-friendly longitudinal checked generated variable of the Body Mass Index (BMI). Persons with a successful individual interview ($\$netto \geq 10$ & $\$netto < 20$) have been selected for the rec-type HEALTH. The file has a long-format and additional SORTID with the variable SYEAR (Survey-Year).

In 2006 the SF12 could not any longer been generated for the group of first time respondents (age 16/17 = 307).

In 2010 and 2012 not all sub-samples of the SOEP get the very same questionnaire, thus information to generate MCS and PCS was not surveyed and thus the respective population get a value of “-5” for the variable VALID.

2 Variables in File HEALTH

pid – Never Changing Person ID

syear – Survey Year

| | |
|-----------------------|--------|
| 1984 | 12245 |
| 1985 | 11090 |
| 1986 | 10646 |
| 1987 | 10516 |
| 1988 | 10023 |
| 1989 | 9710 |
| 1990 | 13972 |
| 1991 | 13669 |
| 1992 | 13397 |
| 1993 | 13179 |
| 1994 | 13417 |
| 1995 | 13768 |
| 1996 | 13511 |
| 1997 | 13283 |
| 1998 | 14670 |
| ... (11 rows omitted) | 234359 |
| 2010 | 26720 |
| 2011 | 28733 |
| 2012 | 27983 |
| 2013 | 30956 |
| 2014 | 27465 |
| 2015 | 27183 |
| 2016 | 29116 |
| 2017 | 32485 |
| 2018 | 30306 |
| 2019 | 29905 |
| 2020 | 30470 |
| 2021 | 20401 |
| 2022 | 28704 |

| | |
|------|-------|
| 2023 | 28478 |
| 2024 | 34706 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

This file contains detailed health information that had been collected since 2002 (wave S) in a two year replication cycle. All persons with successful individual questionnaires have been selected for the rectype HEALTH (\$netto >= 10 & \$netto < 20).

For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

cid – Original Household Number, Case ID

valid – Completeness Of Generation Of SOEPvSF12

| | | |
|----|---|--------|
| 1 | Yes 1 | 311252 |
| 2 | No 2 | 108456 |
| -1 | No Answer | 0 |
| -2 | Does not apply | 0 |
| -3 | Answer improbable | 0 |
| -4 | Inadmissible multiple response | 0 |
| -5 | Not included in this version of the questionnaire | 14984 |
| -6 | Version of questionnaire with modified filtering | 0 |
| -7 | Only available in less restricted edition | 0 |
| -8 | | 420374 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable VALID indicates the completeness status of all twelve variables necessary to calculate the SOEPvSF12 scale.

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mcs – MCS: Summary Scale Mental (NBS)

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable mcs is calculated using explorative factor analysis (PCA, varimax rotation). The mean value of the SOEP 2004 population 50 points and SD of 10 points.

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pcs – PCS: Summary Scale Physical (NBS)

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable pcs is calculated using explorative factor analysis (PCA, varimax rotation). The mean value of the SOEP 2004 population 50 points and SD of 10 points.

Matthias Nübling, Hanfried H. Andersen, Axel Mühlbacher, Jürgen Schupp, and Gert G. Wagner (2007): Computation of Standard Values for Physical and Mental Health Scale Scores Using the SOEP Version of SF12v2. Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 1278(1), (in print)

For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

pf_nbs – Physical Functioning (NBS)

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| 3.92223834991455 | 1 |
| 27.2503871917725 | 25731 |
| 35.026439666748 | 17059 |
| 42.8024864196777 | 73701 |
| 50.5785369873047 | 49106 |
| 58.3545875549316 | 145651 |
| -1 | 108456 |
| -3.8538122177124 | 1 |
| -5 | 14984 |
| -8 | 420374 |
| -11.6298580169678 | 1 |
| -50.5101089477539 | 1 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable pf_nbs is calculated as a z-transformed scale.

Matthias Nübling, Hanfried H. Andersen, Axel Mühlbacher, Jürgen Schupp, and Gert G. Wagner (2007): Computation of Standard Values for Physical and Mental Health Scale Scores Using the SOEP Version of SF12v2. Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 1278(1), (in print)

For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

rp_nbs – Role Physical (NBS)

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| 3.0272102355957 | 1 |
| 7.75132179260254 | 2 |
| 12.475435256958 | 1 |
| 17.1995468139648 | 1 |
| 21.9236583709717 | 6724 |
| 26.6477699279785 | 2844 |
| 31.3718814849854 | 21430 |
| 36.0959930419922 | 11117 |
| 40.8201065063477 | 48507 |
| 45.5442161560059 | 21357 |
| 50.2683296203613 | 58679 |
| 54.9924430847168 | 22769 |
| 59.716552734375 | 117820 |
| -1 | 108456 |
| -5 | 14984 |
| -8 | 420374 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable rp_nbs is calculated as a z-transformed scale.

Matthias Nübling, Hanfried H. Andersen, Axel Mühlbacher, Jürgen Schupp, and Gert G. Wagner (2007): Computation of Standard Values for Physical and Mental Health Scale Scores Using the SOEP Version of SF12v2. Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 1278(1), (in print)

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bp_nbs – Bodily Pain (NBS)

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| 23.0029487609863 | 8503 |
| 32.2144432067871 | 32884 |
| 41.4259414672852 | 66031 |
| 50.6374359130859 | 83941 |
| 59.8489303588867 | 119887 |
| -1 | 108456 |
| -5 | 14984 |
| -8 | 420374 |
| -23.0545330047607 | 6 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable bp_nbs is calculated as a z-transformed scale.

Matthias Nübling, Hanfried H. Andersen, Axel Mühlbacher, Jürgen Schupp, and Gert G. Wagner (2007): Computation of Standard Values for Physical and Mental Health Scale Scores Using the SOEP Version of SF12v2. Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 127(1), 171-182.

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gh_nbs – General Health (NBS)

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| 24.8463459014893 | 10489 |
| 35.2284049987793 | 40325 |
| 45.610466003418 | 95965 |
| 55.9925231933594 | 124667 |
| 66.3745880126953 | 39803 |
| 118.284881591797 | 3 |
| -1 | 108456 |
| -5 | 14984 |
| -8 | 420374 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable gh_nbs is calculated as a z-transformed scale.

Matthias Nübling, Hanfried H. Andersen, Axel Mühlbacher, Jürgen Schupp, and Gert G. Wagner (2007): Computation of Standard Values for Physical and Mental Health Scale Scores Using the SOEP Version of SF12v2. Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 127(1), 171-182.

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vt_nbs – Vitality (NBS)

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| 26.8213653564453 | 15250 |
| 37.7670745849609 | 54253 |
| 48.7127838134766 | 134979 |
| 59.6584930419922 | 92156 |
| 70.6042022705078 | 14601 |

| | |
|------------------|--------|
| 125.332748413086 | 13 |
| -1 | 108456 |
| -5 | 14984 |
| -8 | 420374 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable vt_nbs is calculated as a z-transformed scale.

Matthias Nübling, Hanfried H. Andersen, Axel Mühlbacher, Jürgen Schupp, and Gert G. Wagner (2007): Computation of Standard Values for Physical and Mental Health Scale Scores Using the SOEP Version of SF12v2. Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 127(1), 171-182.

For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

sf_nbs – Social Functioning (NBS)

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| 14.6924066543579 | 3882 |
| 25.299108505249 | 17255 |
| 35.9058113098145 | 44900 |
| 46.5125160217285 | 64104 |
| 57.1192207336426 | 181110 |
| -1 | 108456 |
| -5 | 14984 |
| -8 | 420374 |
| -38.3411102294922 | 1 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable sf_nbs is calculated as a z-transformed scale.

Matthias Nübling, Hanfried H. Andersen, Axel Mühlbacher, Jürgen Schupp, and Gert G. Wagner (2007): Computation of Standard Values for Physical and Mental Health Scale Scores Using the SOEP Version of SF12v2. Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 127(1), 171-182.

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re_nbs – Role Emotional (NBS)

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| 13.3378076553345 | 2571 |
| 18.9306488037109 | 1031 |
| 24.5234889984131 | 10316 |
| 30.1163311004639 | 7747 |
| 35.709171295166 | 33966 |
| 41.3020133972168 | 19510 |
| 46.8948554992676 | 58109 |
| 52.4876976013184 | 20077 |
| 58.0805358886719 | 157924 |
| -1 | 108456 |
| -3.44071388244629 | 1 |
| -5 | 14984 |

-8 420374

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable `re_nbs` is calculated as a z-transformed scale.

Matthias Nübling, Hanfried H. Andersen, Axel Mühlbacher, Jürgen Schupp, and Gert G. Wagner (2007): Computation of Standard Values for Physical and Mental Health Scale Scores Using the SOEP Version of SF12v2. Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 127(1), 171-182.

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mh_nbs – Mental Health (NBS)

| | |
|-------------------|--------|
| 1.41182422637939 | 1 |
| 7.51832008361816 | 1 |
| 19.7313137054443 | 1326 |
| 25.8378124237061 | 3716 |
| 31.9443092346191 | 16475 |
| 38.0508079528809 | 32984 |
| 44.1573028564453 | 60457 |
| 50.263801574707 | 63866 |
| 56.3702964782715 | 75253 |
| 62.4767951965332 | 40881 |
| 68.5832901000977 | 16284 |
| 86.9027862548828 | 4 |
| 93.00927734375 | 2 |
| -1 | 108456 |
| -4.69467639923096 | 1 |
| -5 | 14984 |
| -8 | 420374 |
| -10.8011722564697 | 1 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable `mh_nbs` is calculated as a z-transformed scale.

Matthias Nübling, Hanfried H. Andersen, Axel Mühlbacher, Jürgen Schupp, and Gert G. Wagner (2007): Computation of Standard Values for Physical and Mental Health Scale Scores Using the SOEP Version of SF12v2. Schmollers Jahrbuch, Vol. 127(1), 171-182.

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bmi – Body-Mass-Index

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable BMI represents the Body-Mass-Index of the respondents. It is calculated from the variables `BWEIGHT` and `HEIGHT` by the formula $BMI = BWEIGHT / (HEIGHT)^2$.

For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

height – Body Height In cm

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable HEIGHT represents the body Height of the respondents in cm which is directly asked in every second year since 2002 (Wave S). The corresponding variable can be found in the \$P-file (for teenagers who has responded to the Youth-questionnaire the respective information was surveyed the first time in 2006 wave W and can be found in the \$PAGE17-files).

In contrast to the \$P/\$PAGE17-variable the variable HEIGHT is edited with respect to item-nonresponse and outliers.

In case of item-nonresponse missing values are imputed by the most recent existing value. It is assumed that for a two-year-period a change of body height of more than 10 cm is implausible if the values of the other observation years differ only in a range of at most 2 cm. Thus the respective information is imputed by the average of the other values of the respondent.

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fheight – Imputation Flag For Height\$\$

| | | |
|----|---|--------|
| 0 | No Imputation 0 | 293373 |
| 1 | Imputed Or Edited 1 | 137 |
| -1 | No Answer | 0 |
| -2 | Does not apply | 0 |
| -3 | Answer improbable | 0 |
| -4 | Inadmissible multiple response | 0 |
| -5 | Not included in this version of the questionnaire | 29913 |
| -6 | Version of questionnaire with modified filtering | 0 |
| -7 | Only available in less restricted edition | 0 |
| -8 | | 531643 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable FHEIGHT\$\$ designates imputations of item-nonresponse respectively edited values in the variable HEIGHT.

For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

weight – Weight in kg

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable BWEIGHT represents the body weight of the respondents in kg which is directly asked in every second year since 2002 (Wave S). The corresponding variable can be found in the \$P-file (for teenagers who has responded to the Youth-questionnaire the respective information was surveyed the first time in 2006 wave W and can be found in the \$PAGE17-files).

In contrast to the \$P/\$PAGE17-variable the variable BWEIGHT is edited with respect outliers but not imputed for item-nonresponse.

It is assumed that for a two-year-period a change of body weight of more than 35 kg is implausible if the values of the other observation years differ only in a range of at most 7 kg. Thus the respective information is imputed by the average of the other values of the respondent.

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fweight – Imputation Flag For Weight\$\$

| | | | |
|----|---|---|--------|
| 0 | No Imputation | 0 | 293378 |
| 1 | Imputed Or Edited | 1 | 132 |
| -1 | No Answer | | 0 |
| -2 | Does not apply | | 0 |
| -3 | Answer improbable | | 0 |
| -4 | Inadmissible multiple response | | 0 |
| -5 | Not included in this version of the questionnaire | | 29913 |
| -6 | Version of questionnaire with modified filtering | | 0 |
| -7 | Only available in less restricted edition | | 0 |
| -8 | | | 531643 |

Waves: This information is available since 2002 (wave S) and will be provided for every second year.

The variable FWEIGHT\$\$ designates imputations of item-nonresponse respectively edited values in the variable BWEIGHT.

For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)