1542 2025

SOEP Survey Papers
Series D – Variable Descriptions and Coding

SOEP-Core v40.1 – HEALTH

Markus Grabka and SOEP Group

DIW SOEP

Running since 1984, the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) is a wide-ranging representative longitudinal study of private households, located at the German Institute for Economic Research, DIW Berlin.

The aim of the SOEP Survey Papers Series is to thoroughly document the survey's data collection and data processing. The SOEP Survey Papers is comprised of the following series:

Series A – Survey Instruments (Erhebungsinstrumente)
Series B – Survey Reports (Methodenberichte)
Series C – Data Documentation (Datendokumentationen)
Series D – Variable Descriptions and Coding
Series E – SOEPmonitors
Series F – SOEP Newsletters
Series G – General Issues and Teaching Materials

The SOEP Survey Papers are available at http://www.diw.de/soepsurveypapers

Editors:
Dr. Jan Goebel, DIW Berlin
Dr. Christian Hunkler, DIW Berlin
Prof. Dr. Philipp Lersch, DIW Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Dr. Levent Neyse, DIW Berlin and Berlin Social Science Center (WZB)
Prof. Dr. Carsten Schröder, DIW Berlin and Freie Universität Berlin
Prof. Dr. Sabine Zinn, DIW Berlin and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Please cite this paper as follows:
Markus Grabka and SOEP Group, 2025. SOEP-Core v40.1 – HEALTH. SOEP Survey Papers 1542: Series D – Variable Descriptions and Coding. Berlin: DIW Berlin/SOEP

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.
© 2025 by SOEP

ISSN: 2193-5580 (online)

DIW Berlin
German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP)
Mohrenstr. 58
10117 Berlin
Germany

soeppapers@diw.de

The German Socio Economic Panel at DIW Berlin

SOEP-Core v40.1 – HEALTH

Markus Grabka and SOEP Group

2025

The file health is part of a collection, which is released with doi:10.5684/soep.core.v40.1o.

Contents

1 General Information 3

2 Variables in File HEALTH 3
pid – Never Changing Person ID . . . 3
syear – Survey Year . . . 3
cid – Original Houshold Number, Case ID . . . 4
valid – Completeness Of Generation Of SOEPvSF12 . . . 4
mcs – MCS: Summary Scale Mental (NBS) . . . 4
pcs – PCS: Summary Scale Physical (NBS) . . . 4
pf_nbs – Physical Functioning (NBS) . . . 5
rp_nbs – Role Physical (NBS) . . . 5
bp_nbs – Bodily Pain (NBS) . . . 6
gh_nbs – General Health (NBS) . . . 6
vt_nbs – Vitality (NBS) . . . 6
sf_nbs – Social Functioning (NBS) . . . 7
re_nbs – Role Emotional (NBS) . . . 7
mh_nbs – Mental Health (NBS) . . . 8
bmi – Body-Mass-Index . . . 8
height – Body Height In cm . . . 9
fheight – Imputation Flag For Height$$ . . . 9
weight – Weight in kg . . . 9
fweight – Imputation Flag For Weight$$ . . . 10

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 >= 10 & $netto < 20) have been selected for the rectype 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
...	(10 rows omitted)	213567
2009		20792
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

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 Houshold Number, Case ID

valid – Completeness Of Generation Of SOEPvSF12

1	Yes 1	277461
2	No 2	107541
-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.
For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

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

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	22889
35.026439666748	14797
42.8024864196777	64812
50.5785369873047	42999
58.3545875549316	131960
-1	107541
-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
12.475435256958	1
17.1995468139648	1
21.9236583709717	5955
26.6477699279785	2501
31.3718814849854	18959
36.0959930419922	9755
40.8201065063477	42727
45.5442161560059	18729
50.2683296203613	51961
54.9924430847168	20013
59.716552734375	106858
-1	107541
-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)
For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

bp_nbs – Bodily Pain (NBS)

23.0029487609863	7501
32.2144432067871	29270
41.4259414672852	58197
50.6374359130859	74673
59.8489303588867	107816
-1	107541
-5	14984
-8	420374
-23.0545330047607	4

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

gh_nbs – General Health (NBS)

24.8463459014893	9445
35.2284049987793	36175
45.610466003418	85456
55.9925231933594	111187
66.3745880126953	35197
118.284881591797	1
-1	107541
-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.
For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

vt_nbs – Vitality (NBS)

26.8213653564453	13732
37.7670745849609	48486
48.7127838134766	119942
59.6584930419922	82248
70.6042022705078	13046

125.332748413086	7
-1	107541
-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	3358
25.299108505249	14963
35.9058113098145	38920
46.5125160217285	56650
57.1192207336426	163569
-1	107541
-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.
For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

re_nbs – Role Emotional (NBS)

13.3378076553345	2249
18.9306488037109	836
24.5234889984131	9000
30.1163311004639	6643
35.709171295166	29463
41.3020133972168	16978
46.8948554992676	51557
52.4876976013184	17265
58.0805358886719	143470
-1	107541
-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.
For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

mh_nbs – Mental Health (NBS)

1.41182422637939	1
7.51832008361816	1
19.7313137054443	1186
25.8378124237061	3324
31.9443092346191	14859
38.0508079528809	29623
44.1573028564453	53657
50.263801574707	56835
56.3702964782715	67121
62.4767951965332	36279
68.5832901000977	14569
86.9027862548828	2
93.00927734375	2
-1	107541
-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.
For more information, contact: Markus M. Grabka (Tel. +49-30-89789-339 / mgrabka@diw.de)

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

fheight – Imputation Flag For Height$$

0	No Imputation 0	264241
1	Imputed Or Edited 1	114
-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	24362
-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.

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

fweight – Imputation Flag For Weight$$

0	No Imputation 0	264234
1	Imputed Or Edited 1	121
-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	24362
-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)