

Walking and Cycling for Exercise and Transport

Users should take some care examining walking and cycling activities. In the original surveys, diarists had the option to describe activities in their own words. Nevertheless, decisions made at the coding level may obscure elements of what diarists reported in relation to these activities, and aspects of these two activities often are not recorded by the diarists. If a person reported walking or cycling purely for sport or enjoyment, this activity was coded as walking or cycling for sport or pleasure. There are circumstances where a person wished to exercise and also needed to travel, and chose cycling or walking from the options for transport. These activities have been coded as transport. There is no possibility to distinguish those active travel episodes undertaken because the diarist did not have a suitable alternative of transport and active travel undertaken as the diarist perceived the opportunity for exercise outweighed potential advantages of alternative forms of transport. The earliest two surveys (1965-66 and 1975-76) did not collect mode of transport. Thus, in these two surveys, walking and cycling are only coded when the diarist recorded these as walking or cycling for exercise. The 1992-94 survey did not code walking and cycling for exercise, but this survey did record detailed mode of transport. This survey also did not collect secondary activity. For those cases where the mode of transport is reported as walking or cycling, we coded the secondary activity (sec) as walking or cycling. Users will observe that in most cases where the secondary activity is coded as walking or cycling in the AHTUS version of the NHAPS data, the main activity is transport, but there are also a limited number of cases where the main activity is coded as pet care, sport and exercise, other domestic work, as well as a range of other non-travel activities. Though some walking and cycling for pleasure can be identified in the 1992-94 data, the level is much lower and not comparable with the level reported in the 1985 and 2003 data.

Users also should note that for the 1985 through 2003 data, we did impute unrecorded mode of transport when the main activity is transport as unspecified mode of transport. If the diarist reported their main or secondary activity as walking or cycling for exercise or for fun and did not record a mode of transport, we did not impute any information into the mode of transport column. To calculate total recording of any walking or cycling, users should use three variables: main activity (main), secondary activity (sec), and mode of transport (mtrav).