Dataset Description and Variable List

Exmouth Training Ship Boys Record Books (1876-1923)

Authors

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Sources

London Metropolitan Archives, London, Training Ship *Exmouth*, Boys Record Books, MS MAB/2512.

Transcription Process

The dataset was transcribed from digital images of the original records held in the London Metropolitan Archives in London. The transcription took place between April and August 2015 and was conducted by a record transcription company that had experience transcribing historical, handwritten sources. Each record was transcribed by two people with discrepancies being checked by a supervisor. Any questionable entries after that were flagged to the PI who provided guidance on transcription.

We transcribed the Boys Records up to those born in 1908. There are additional records available after this that could be transcribed to extend the data if necessary. However, given the weaknesses in this dataset described in the Readme document, it did not make sense to create an anonymised version of the later records.

The PI and RO also performed a series of checks on the transcribed data to ensure that the transcription was accurate. This included checking to make sure that the day, month and year transcriptions were plausible: i.e. they were in the correct range (1-12 for months, 1-31 for days and 1876-1926 for years) and they followed the correct ordinal pattern (birth date, then admission date, then discharge date). We also checked that the anthropometric measurements were in the correct range (0-11 inches) and were not implausibly high or low. When an error was verified as correct in the original document, this was maintained in the source. Some odd cases were verified as correct in the original.

Variables

Variable naming and labelling principles

> Different prefixes to the data refer to time periods or people that the variable relates to.
> - b_ denotes variables related to the boy's birth
> - ad_ denotes variables related to the boy's admission to the *Exmouth*
> - dis_ denotes variables related to the boy's discharge from the *Exmouth*
> - edu_ denotes variables related to the boy's education on the *Exmouth*

Whenever verbatim is listed in the variable label, this indicates that this variable has not been cleaned or streamlined and reflects the original document precisely.

Variable list

id	Unique id for each admission on the ship. Some boys enter the ship more than once and have multiple ids. These match the number of the ship's book in the original records, and the records are also catalogued by number to make it easy to verify any problematic cases in the future.
id_2nd_admission	Admission id for a boy's second admission to the ship.
id_3rd_admission	Admission id for a boy's third admission to the ship.
forename	Forename of boy (verbatim)
surname	Surname of boy (verbatim)
male	All children in the *Exmouth* were boys. Male = 1
b_day	Day of birth (if present in original document – no imputation)
b_month	Month of birth (if present in original document – no imputation)
b_year	Year of birth (if present in original document – no imputation)
ad_day	Admission day
ad_month	Admission month
ad_year	Admission year
ad_age	Age at last birthday at admission (if present in original document – no imputation)
ad_supposed_age	Estimated age of the boy by *Exmouth* personnel. It's not entirely clear what this means. These ages are nearly always lower than the ad_age, which suggests that *Exmouth* personnel believed that the boys were lying about their age. There is a lengthy discussion of this in Schneider (2018).
ad_heightft	Height at admission (ft)
ad_heightin	Height at admission (in)
ad_weightlb	Weight at admission (lb)
ad_chest	Chest circumference at admission (in)
parish	Parish or poor law union that the boy was sent from (verbatim). This has not been cleaned or adapted to be similar spatial units over time.
dis_day	Discharge day

dis_month	Discharge month
dis_year	Discharge year
dis_heightft	Height at discharge (ft)
dis_heightin	Height at discharge (in)
dis_weightlb	Weight at discharge (lb)
dis_chest	Chest circumference at discharge (in)
dis_information	Information about where the boy went after discharge from the ship (verbatim). Sometimes includes addresses where the child was sent, ships on which the boys were apprenticed or where they were transferred within the poor law system. The transcribers put '?' in parts of the text that were illegible.
edu_standard_first	The first educational standard reported by the ship's staff after admission (verbatim). It is not clear what the system of levels was and it may have changed over time.
edu_standard_final	The final educational standard reported by the ship's staff before discharge (verbatim). Again, it is not clear what the system of levels was and it may have changed over time. However, this could be used to track the improvement in a boy's score during his time on the *Exmouth*.

References

Gao, P., & Schneider, E. B. (2018). The Growth Pattern of British Children, 1850-1975. *LSE Economic History Working Paper*, forthcoming.

Schneider, E. B. (2018). Sample Selection Biases and the Historical Growth Pattern of Children. *LSE Economic History Working Paper*, 1–31. http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/87075.