

Catalogue no. 11-522-XIE

**Statistics Canada International
Symposium Series - Proceedings**

**Symposium 2006 :
Methodological Issues in
Measuring Population Health**

2006



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Merging Area-Level Census Data with Survey and Administrative Data

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Abstract

This paper explains how to append census area-level summary data to survey or administrative data. It uses examples from survey datasets present in Statistics Canada Research Data Centres, but the methods also apply to external datasets, including administrative datasets. Four examples illustrate common situations faced by researchers: (1) when the survey (or administrative) and census data both contain the same level of geographic identifiers, coded to the same year standard ("vintage") of census geography (for example, if both have 2001 DA); (2) when the two files contain geographic identifiers of the same vintage, but at different levels of census geography (for example, 1996 EA in the survey, but 1996 CT in the census data); (3) when the two files contain data coded to different vintages of census geography (such as 1996 EA for the survey, but 2001 DA for the census); (4) when the survey data are lacking in geographic identifiers, and those identifiers must first be generated from postal codes present on the file. The examples are shown using SAS syntax, but the principles apply to other programming languages or statistical packages.

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