

# Univariate Data Description: One Variable at a Time

- Topics:

- Best practices for working with datasets and syntax
- Terminology for different types of variables
- Summarizing different types of variables
  - Categorical: Frequency, proportion, and percentage
  - Quantitative: Central tendency, dispersion, asymmetry
  - Computation: Mean, variance, SD, skewness, and kurtosis
  - \*\*Using STATA and R to do all of this\*\*

*\*\*Note: there is no separate example document for this unit; videos will demonstrate how to work with each program's files*

# Best Practices for Working with Datasets and Variables in Statistical Software

- Quantitative data can be stored in a variety of formats
- We will use data stored in excel (with **.xlsx** extension) because it is viewable outside of specific statistical software, but it can easily be imported into any package
- 3 steps to import .xlsx data into either stats program:
  1. Save dataset to a folder and get the address to that folder
  2. Copy the folder address into the program syntax
  3. Run (execute) the syntax to import the .xlsx data into the program's native format (STATA or R) for use in analysis
- Historically this has been the hardest step, so I have made new videos using Example 1 to walk you through the process...

# Best Practices for Working with Datasets and Variables in Statistical Software

At least 3 useful pieces of information will be stored for each variable (see demo in videos describing use of software for example 1):

1. **Variable name** = column name (required)
  - No spaces or special characters, must start with letter
  - To be referred to when requesting info or results about that column
2. **Variable label** = column description (optional; not used in R)
  - Longer text label that can document the variable in more detail
  - e.g., how it was created, # categories, which version or metric
3. **Value label** = verbal labels that go with the numbers (optional)
  - Used for categorical variables only (in which numbers are labels)
  - Makes results easier to read (i.e., don't have to remember values)
  - Can make a text-only (string) variable as a workaround (I did in R)

# How to Store Variables in Databases

- When entering data, there are things you can do up front to save yourself a lot of tedious hassle later:
  - Btw, it's fine—preferable—to use spreadsheets (e.g., excel) to enter the data, no matter how you plan to analyze it
    - But keep in mind that “meaningful” formatting will not transfer (e.g., coloring cells yellow will mean nothing in stats software)
- Put **variable names** in the first row of the spreadsheet
  - Do not use spaces or special characters other than \_ underscore
  - Use only as many characters as necessary to keep it unique
    - Use variable labels to add extra detail for clarification
  - Start with a letter, not a number (is rule in most stats programs)
  - Use a common stem for a series of related variables
    - e.g., stress1, stress2, stress3.... wellbeing1, wellbeing2, wellbeing3...
    - This is helpful when you need to refer to them as a series

# How to Store Variables in Databases

- Enter **numbers for categorical variables**, not text
  - Text variable = string variable = case- and space-sensitive
    - e.g., "control group" is not the same as "Control Group "
  - Add **value labels** to indicate what the numbers represent
    - It can be helpful to use the number in the value label so that the order of the labels is the same alphabetically and numerically
      - e.g., group: 0 = "0. Control Group" 1 = "1. Alternative Group"
  - Do not mix numeric and text entries in the same variable
    - Numbers will be read as text → becomes a string variable instead
  - IMHO: Do not use missing data codes (e.g., -99 = missing)
    - You must define them as such for -99 to NOT be read as data
    - Just leave them missing values blank—if you need to keep track of reasons for missing values, use a new categorical variable to do so

# How to Store Variables in Databases

- Tips for handling entry of dependent data more easily
  - Create a unique ID variable for each level of sampling
  - Create separate databases for each level of sampling—you can easily merge them together so that the values of the higher-level variables are replicated automatically across the rows of the lower-level database (as is needed)
- For example: people collected from different countries?
  - Person-level database: one row per person; include person ID, country ID, and all person-level variables
  - *Separate* country-level database: one row per country; include country ID and all country-level variables (when merged, will replicate across people)
- For example: multiple occasions from same person?
  - Occasion-level database: one row per occasion; include occasion ID, person ID, and all variables measured per occasion
  - *Separate* person-level database: one row per person; include person ID and all person-level variables (when merged, will replicate across occasions)

# Tips for Effective Syntax

- Although STATA and R allow you to type commands directly into the interactive console and run them, please don't do it this way!
- **Instead, build a \*well-commented\* syntax file for Future You that has a cumulative record of WHAT you've done and WHY**
- My syntax files will have the following structure:
  - Start with general options for display of output
  - In R: Install and load packages (or just load if already installed)
  - Set "working directory" (file location) and import data
  - Create any new variables needed for data analysis
  - Optional: Open external text file to save ("log") results to
  - Commands to do analyses—make a new instance for each!
  - Add spaces and section headers to create logical groupings of commands
  - If used: Close external text file of saved results
- I will give you "starter" syntax with this format for each homework

# Types of Variables

- Goal: identify potential types of variables in quantitative data
  - Big picture: **categorical** or **quantitative**?
- This “types” taxonomy will guide **two things** about each variable:
  - What measures can be used to **summarize** its salient features
  - How it can be used in subsequent **analysis** (statistical models)
  - Note: this is related to traditional levels of measurement, but I am approaching it from more of a “how to model them” perspective
- Apparent purpose: Review **univariate descriptive statistics**
  - “univariate” = one variable at a time (as opposed to “multivariate”)
  - “descriptive” = not testing anything, just describing sample data
  - “statistics” = characteristics of a sample (from a population)
- Actual purpose: Give you some familiar ideas with which to begin to use **unfamiliar software** (using GSS practice data)
  - Watch my videos to see how I got these results from STATA and R! 😊



# Categorical Variables: *Numbers are just labels*

- **Binary** (coded as 0 or 1) = 2 choices (or “dichotomous”)
  - e.g., dead or alive; pregnant or not
- **Nominal** = 3+ unordered choices
  - e.g., favorite type of pet, which degree program
- **Ordinal** = 3+ choices with some natural (undeniable) order, but the distances between the values don't mean anything
  - 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree
  - Equally ordinal values: 1, 20, 300, 4000
- Synonyms for a “**categorical**” variable: *discrete* variable, *qualitative* variable, *grouping* variable, *factor* variable in R, *CLASS* variable in SAS (stands for “classification variable”)

# Quantitative Variables: *Numbers are numbers*

- **Interval** measurement → equal distances between values
- Many quantitative variables have **1 or 2 boundaries**
  - **Binomial** = number of occurrences out of known possible
    - e.g., # correct on a test, has **2 boundaries**: 0 and total possible
    - a variable corrected for different possible totals (by computing proportion correct or rate of occurrence) would still be treated as binomial when predicted (just bounded by 0 and 1 instead)
  - **Count** = number of occurrences out of unknown possible
    - e.g., # of cigarettes smoked each day, has **1 boundary** of 0 (or 1) (only whole numbers used, maximum could be any positive number)
  - Btw, count variables have special cases involving **zero values**:
    - No zeros possible? → "zero-truncated count"
    - More zeros than expected (due to mixture)? → "zero-inflated count"

# Quantitative Variables: *Numbers are numbers*

- Other **quantitative** variables are “**continuous**” (still with interval measurement in which the numbers are numbers)
  - But **continuous means unbounded** → can theoretically go on forever in either direction AND take non-integer values
  - Although in this semester’s general linear models (GLMs) our predictors can be any type of variable, **all our outcomes must be *plausibly* continuous with interval measurement**
    - This is because GLMs use a *conditional* normal distribution (stay tuned)
    - Otherwise you need “generalized linear models” (from another class) by which you can choose different distributions for different variable types
- Don’t worry, the key word is “**plausible**”: Truly continuous and interval variables are rare, but there are many variations we often pretend are “continuous and interval enough”
  - These I like to call “**continu-ish**” variables...

# Examples of Continu-ish Variables

- **Ordinal-treated-as-interval:** Values are really ordinal, but there are enough distinct values that people justify treating them as interval
  - e.g., one item on 1–4 ordinal scale? Most likely treated as ordinal
  - e.g., sum of 10 items? Likely treated as interval and continu-ish (even though there are no non-integer values, and range is 10–40)
  - e.g., mean of 10 items (better if items may be missing)? Likely treated as interval and continu-ish (non-integer values, but range is 1–4)
  - Binomial and count variables are often predicted as continu-ish ☹
- **Interval, but still likely continu-ish** (may be bounded in practice)
  - e.g., response time, heart rate → really is continuous with non-integer values (limited only by measurement precision) but is bounded at 0
  - e.g., latent trait estimates from measurement models (IRT, CFA, SEM) → non-integer values, but may have observed ceiling or floor effects

# One Last Type of Variable: Ratio

- A **ratio scale** has a true zero point
  - Examples: length, height, volume, money
- Ratio scales allow references like “twice as long” or “half as much volume” to actually be meaningful
- Ratio scales do not apply to most quantitative variables in the social sciences (which tend to be interval at best)
  - e.g., a score of 50 vs 100 on an IQ test doesn’t mean “half as intelligent” in the same way as a ratio scale
- For all intents and purposes, variables with ratio scaling can be treated as just another quantitative variable

# Univariate Description by Variable Type

- For now, we focus on the possible values of each variable, and thus by what salient features we should describe it
  - **Two main types of variables: categorical or quantitative**
    - Distinctions among categorical predictors will **always** matter!
    - Distinctions among quantitative variables matter more when the variable is treated as a model outcome than when treated as a model predictor
      - How would you know which it is? It depends on your question (stay tuned)
- **Categorical** (numbers are labels): Binary, Ordinal, or Nominal
  - Just need to know **frequency** of each category
  - Often more understandable as **proportion**: frequency divided by total possible (proportion\*100 becomes a "**percentage**")
  - Can be displayed graphically using a **bar graph**
  - **Value labels** make this information easier to present and digest

# Nominal Variable for Marital Status:

## Frequencies and proportions in R, using *table*:

```
table(x=Example1$maritalLabeled,useNA="ifany")
```

1.Married	2.Widowed	3.Divorced	4.Separated	5.Never
337	17	118	23	239

```
prop.table(table(x=Example1$maritalLabeled,  
useNA="ifany"))
```

1.Married	2.Widowed	3.Divorced	4.Separated	5.Never
0.4591	0.0232	0.1608	0.0313	0.3256

Example1 = dataset  
maritalLabeled = variable

`useNA="ifany"`  
includes any missing  
values in table

## Frequencies and proportions in STATA, using *tabulate*:

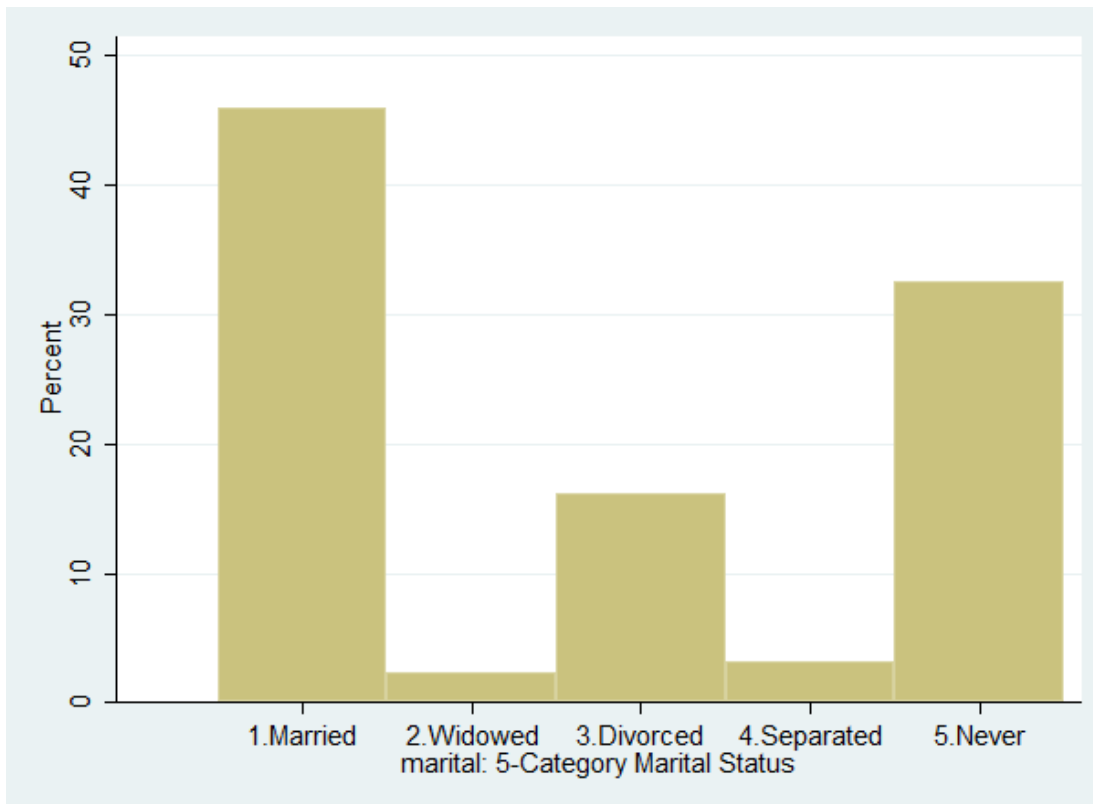
```
tabulate marital, missing
```

marital: 5-Category			
Marital Status	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
1.Married	337	45.91	45.91
2.Widowed	17	2.32	48.23
3.Divorced	118	16.08	64.31
4.Separated	23	3.13	67.44
5.Never	239	32.56	100.00
Total	734	100.00	

Note: for your **HW 1**,  
these **percentages will  
need to be entered as  
proportions out of 1**.  
For instance, 45.59%  
should be entered as  
0.4559 instead of 45.59.

# Nominal Variable for Marital Status: Request a Bar Graph using **STATA**

```
// histogram makes plots for categorical or quantitative variables  
// marital: is discrete, in percent, x-axis goes 1 to 5 using value labels  
histogram marital, discrete percent xla(1/5, valuelabel)
```



Further customization is available in the window this graph pops up in

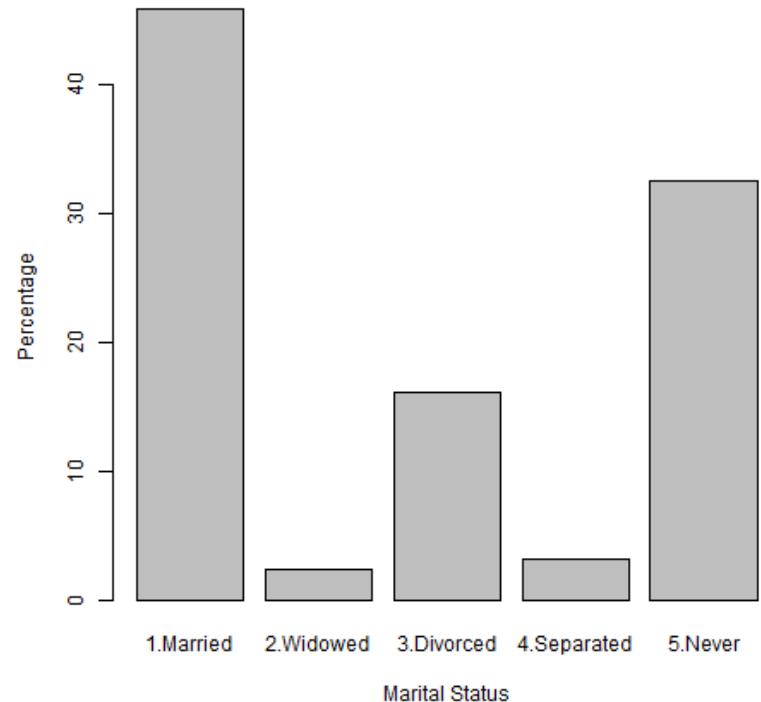
- x-axis (horizontal) shows each (labeled) observed category
- y-axis (vertical) shows percentage for each category



# Nominal Variable for Marital Status: Request a Bar Graph using R

```
# barplot can generate frequency plots for numeric variables  
# here is a work-around to make it use our string maritalLabeled variable  
barplot(height=table(x=Example1$maritalLabeled,useNA="ifany"),  
        ylab="Frequency",xlab="Marital Status") # axis labels
```

```
# here is how to trick barplot  
# into plotting percentages instead  
barplot(height=prop.table  
        (table(x=Example1$maritalLabeled,  
              useNA="ifany"))*100,  
        ylab="Percentage",  
        xlab="Marital Status") # axis labels
```



Further customization is available in many places that I haven't tried to figure out yet, like ggplot...

# What about Quantitative Variables?

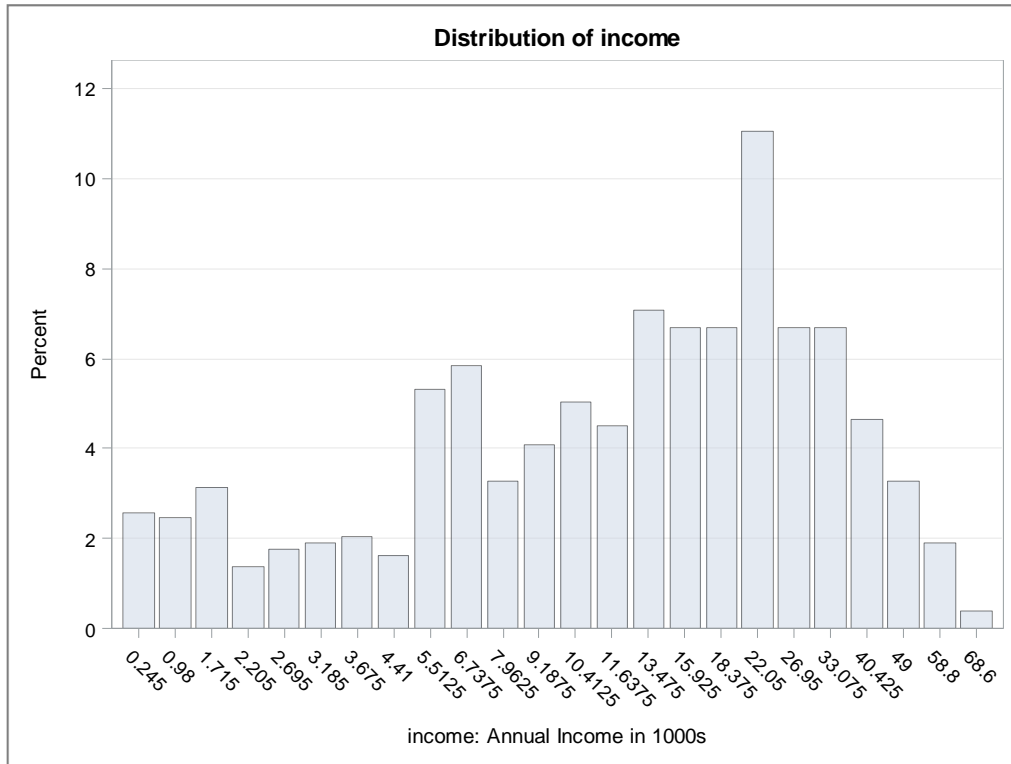
- **Quantitative variable:**  
numbers are numbers!  
(interval measurement)
  - May be bounded (binomial, count) or "continu-ish"
- For quantitative variables with **many observed values**, a frequency list of each distinct value is less useful (because interval is ignored)
  - For instance, consider annual income in \$1000s (clearly from multiple choices, so it's "continu-ish" here):

```
. tabulate income, missing
```

income: Annual Income in 1000s	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0.25	19	2.59	2.59
0.98	18	2.45	5.04
1.72	23	3.13	8.17
2.21	10	1.36	9.54
2.69	13	1.77	11.31
3.19	14	1.91	13.22
3.67	15	2.04	15.26
4.41	12	1.63	16.89
5.51	39	5.31	22.21
6.74	43	5.86	28.07
7.96	24	3.27	31.34
9.19	30	4.09	35.42
10.41	37	5.04	40.46
11.64	33	4.50	44.96
13.48	52	7.08	52.04
15.93	49	6.68	58.72
18.38	49	6.68	65.40
22.05	81	11.04	76.43
26.95	49	6.68	83.11
33.08	49	6.68	89.78
40.42	34	4.63	94.41
49.00	24	3.27	97.68
58.80	14	1.91	99.59
68.60	3	0.41	100.00
Total	734	100.00	

# What about Quantitative Variables?

- (SAS) bar graph: also not helpful..



Values are being treated as distinct categories without regard to the intervals between them...

```
. tabulate income, missing
```

income: Annual Income in 1000s	Freq.	Percent	Cum.
0.25	19	2.59	2.59
0.98	18	2.45	5.04
1.72	23	3.13	8.17
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4.41	12	1.63	16.89
5.51	39	5.31	22.21
6.74	43	5.86	28.07
7.96	24	3.27	31.34
9.19	30	4.09	35.42
10.41	37	5.04	40.46
11.64	33	4.50	44.96
13.48	52	7.08	52.04
15.93	49	6.68	58.72
18.38	49	6.68	65.40
22.05	81	11.04	76.43
26.95	49	6.68	83.11
33.08	49	6.68	89.78
40.42	34	4.63	94.41
49.00	24	3.27	97.68
58.80	14	1.91	99.59
68.60	3	0.41	100.00
Total	734	100.00	

# What about Quantitative Variables?

- **Instead, we need a histogram**, which combines observations on the x-axis into “bins” (that you can and should choose)
    - Because different programs will bin differently, changing what it looks like...
    - Note that the same “histogram” or “hist” command is still used
- 

- In **STATA**:

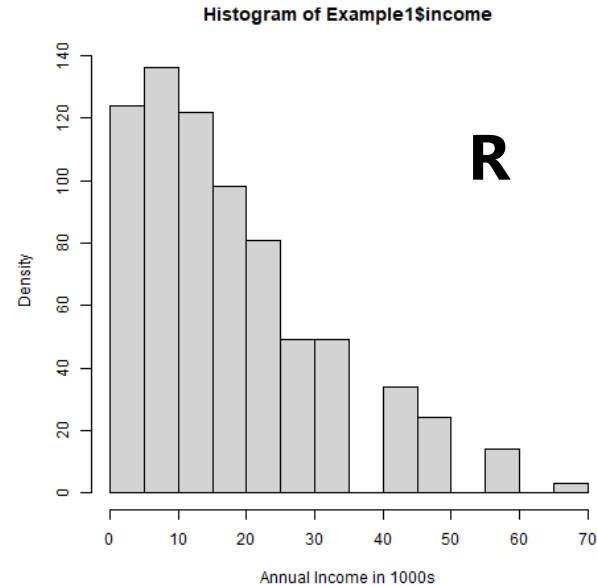
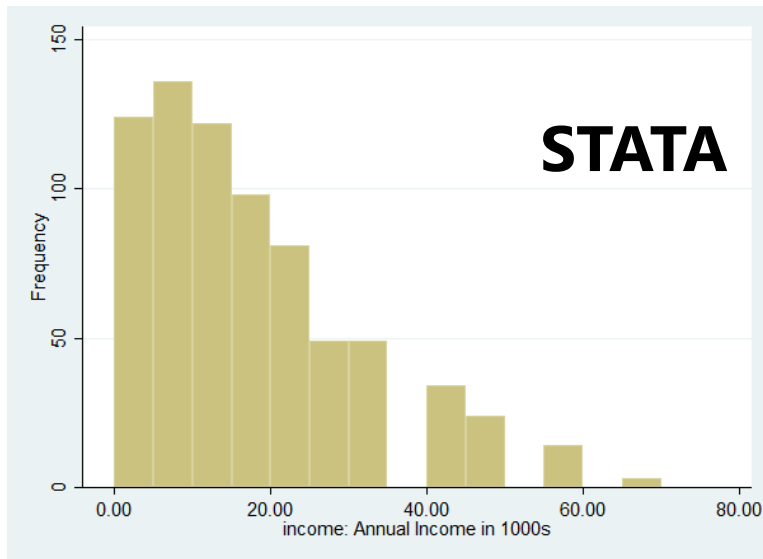
```
// histogram for income in frequency in bins of 5 starting at 0  
histogram income, frequency width(5) start(0)
```

---

- In **R**:

```
# histogram for income in frequency with 15 bins  
hist(x=Example1$income, freq=TRUE, breaks=15,  
     ylab="Density", xlab="Annual Income in 100s") # axis labels
```

# Histogram for Quantitative Variable Income



These are both showing frequencies for ease of interpretation

Big picture: There are fewer people who make more money than who make less money!

These pictures are designed to show the “**distribution**” of each quantitative variable, which we can summarize as follows...

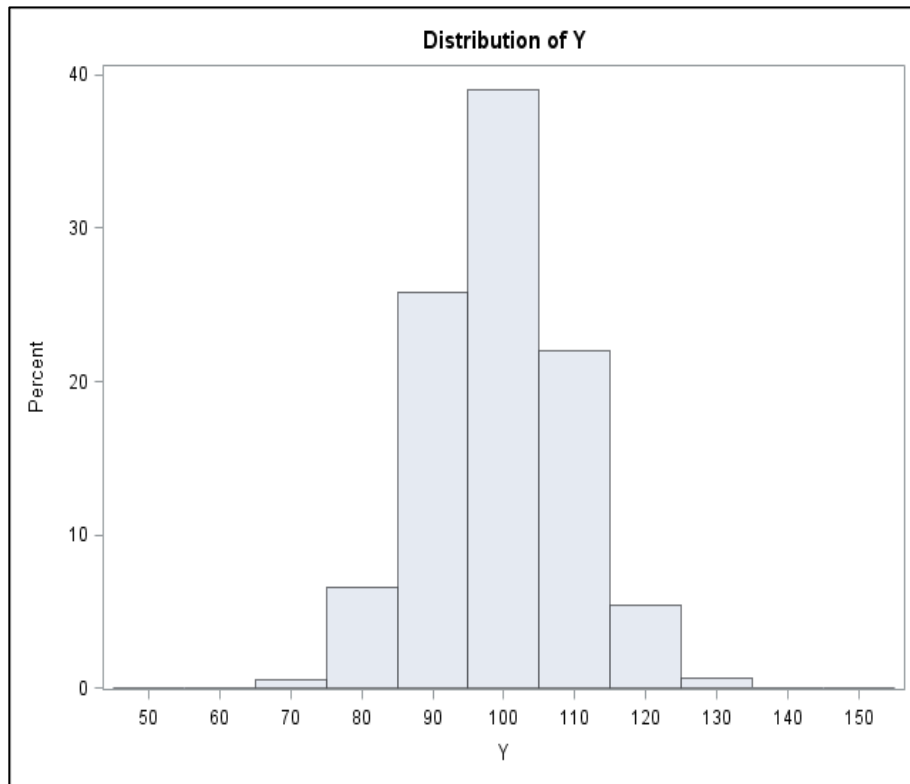
# Summarizing Quantitative Variables:

## 3 Salient Features

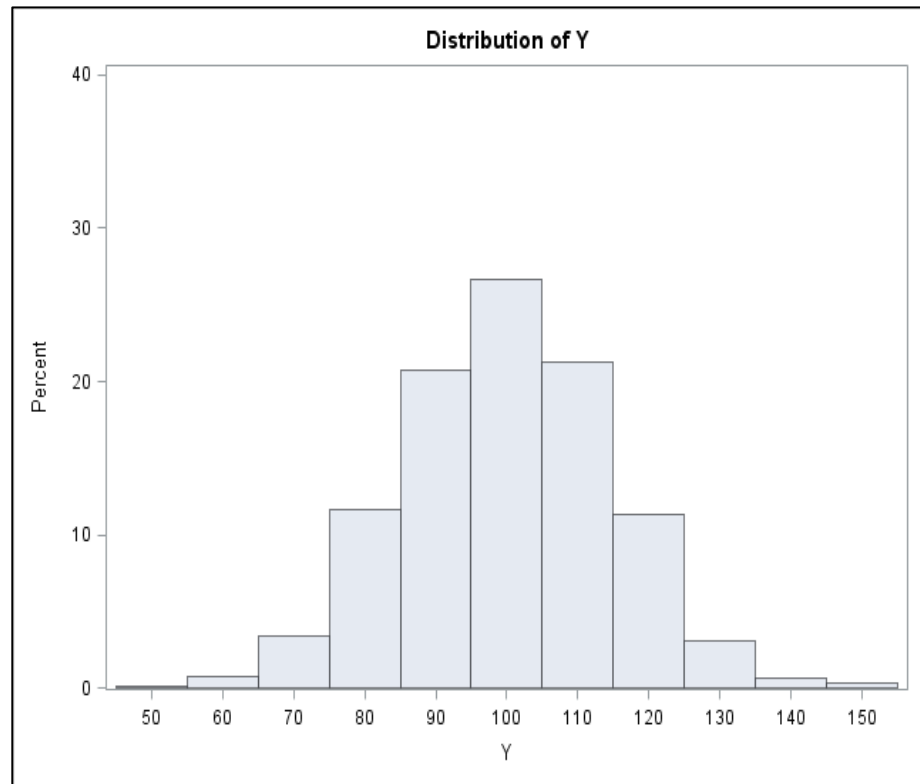
1. **Central tendency:** think “middle of the distribution”; can be given by:
  - Mean = arithmetic average (abbreviated “*M*” in results)
  - Also by Median = middle value if ordered from most to least
  - Also by Mode = most frequent value; rarely mentioned in practice
2. **Dispersion:** think “spread of the distribution”, can be given by:
  - Standard Deviation (abbreviated “*SD*” in results) = average deviation of any given observation (e.g., person) from the mean
  - Variance (abbreviated “*VAR*” in results) = *squared* average deviation of any given observation (e.g., person) from the mean (so  $VAR = SD^2$ )
  - Also by Inter-Quartile Range = distance from 25th to 75th percentile
3. **Skewness:** think “asymmetry” (more values on one side than the other)
  - Is often caused by **natural boundaries** in practice (e.g., counts at 0)
  - Is something to factor into your analysis, but is not usually reported

# Illustrating Differences in Dispersion (Mean = 100 in both histograms)

Standard Deviation (SD) = **10**,  
Variance (VAR) =  $SD \times SD = 100$

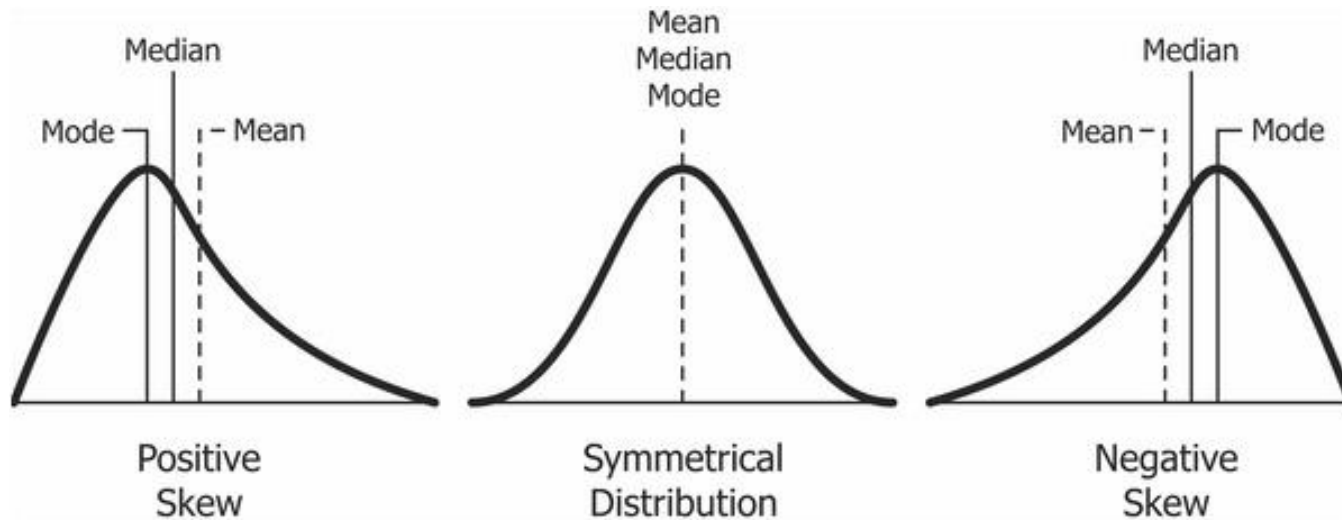


Standard Deviation (SD) = **15**,  
Variance (VAR) =  $SD \times SD = 225$



# Salient Feature #3 of Quantitative Variables: Skewness (Asymmetry)

- **Skewness** can be positive, 0(=symmetric), or negative; **skewness is named for where the tail is headed!**



Note: Mean, median, and mode will diverge in asymmetric variables, so which is reported as an index of central tendency then matters!

**Skewness is often caused by natural boundaries** (e.g., count variables are often positively skewed). Positive skewness can also result from “floor effects” (and negative skewness can result from “ceiling effects”) in binomial-type variables (or both, which is “bimodal”).



# Caveats: Population vs. Sample Notation

- Numeric characteristics of the population are called “**parameters**”
  - You almost NEVER know these unless you make up (“simulate”) the data 😊
- Numeric characteristics of a specific sample are called “**statistics**”
  - Thus, results sections typically report “descriptive statistics” by that name
- In intro classes, a big deal is usually made about the difference between population and sample notation for univariate (and bivariate) statistics
  - **Population** notation usually uses **Greek** letters (e.g., pandemic alphabet)
  - **Sample** notation usually uses **Roman** letters (e.g., English alphabet)
  - This distinction in notation is important to maintain in SOME contexts, such as when describing the results of simulation studies (i.e., research examining the uses of quantitative methods, where the goal is to see how accurately a given technique returns the known population values)
  - This distinction in notation starts to fall apart in describing the analysis model estimated and its results, in which a mixture of notation is more common (because people understand that you only have a sample)
  - I present both in what follows to link to what you’ve likely seen before...

# Calculating the Arithmetic\* Mean of Quantitative (or Binary) Variables

- Sample notation:
  - $y_i$  = "y sub i" = outcome  $y$  for person  $i$
  - $N$  = "big N" = number of persons in the sample
  - $y_N$  = "y sub N" = last person in the sample
  - $\bar{y}$  = "y bar" = sample arithmetic\* mean
    - Note the lack of an  $i$  subscript—this is because  $\bar{y}$  is a constant, not a variable
- How to calculate a **sample mean** (abbreviated  **$M$**  in results):

$$\bar{y} = \frac{y_1 + y_2 + \cdots + y_N}{N} = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N y_i}{N}$$

→ "Start at  $i = 1$ , sum over all the  $y$  values up to  $N$ , then divide that total by  $N$ "

- **Sample mean  $\bar{y}$**  ("y bar") is an estimator of **population mean  $\mu$**  ("mu")

\* Yes, there are other kinds of means (geometric, harmonic, weighted)...

# Calculating the Variance (Dispersion) of Quantitative Variables

- Notation to calculate **variance** (abbreviated *VAR* in results):

$$\text{Variance} = s^2 = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^N (y_i - \bar{y})^2}{N - 1}$$

→ "Start at  $i = 1$ , subtract  $\bar{y}$  from each  $y$  value, square that result, sum until  $N$ , then divide by  $N - 1$ "

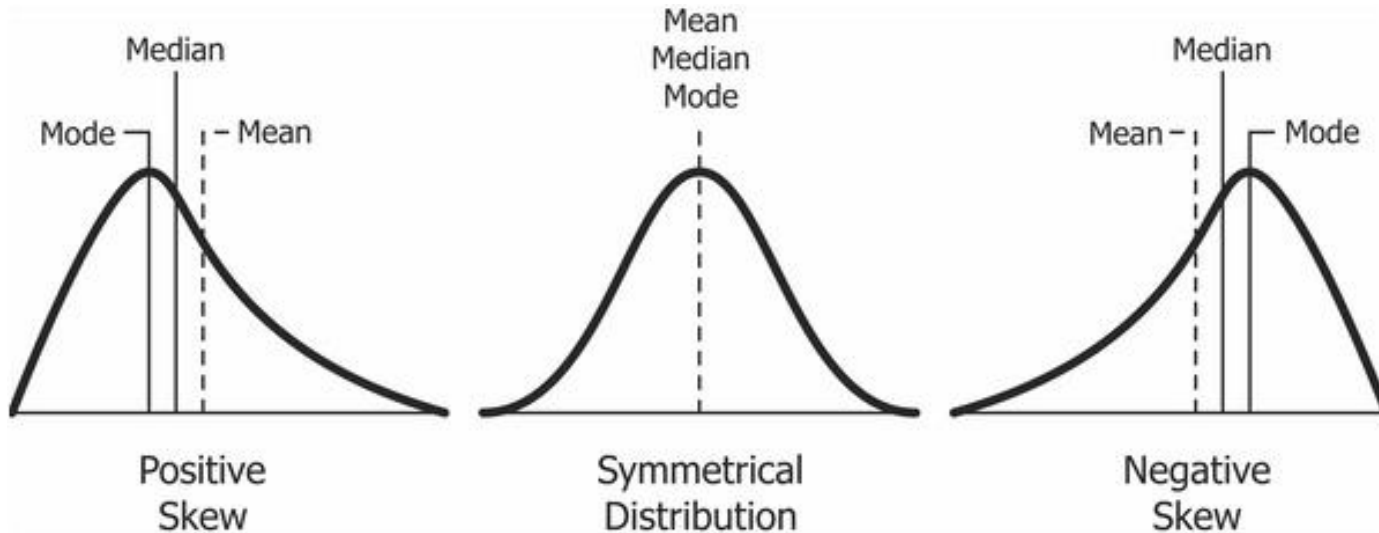
- **Sample variance  $s^2$**  is an estimator of **population variance  $\sigma_e^2$**  ("sigma squared")
- Squaring maintains absolute magnitudes, but because squared units are less interpretable than raw-data units, the **standard deviation** (*SD*, the square root of variance) can be more intuitive: ***SD* is the average distance for any given person from the mean** (e.g., *SD* describes a variable's expected dispersion)
- Btw, in the denominator for variance,  $N - 1$  is used instead of  $N$  to adjust for needing the sample mean in order to calculate the sample variance; later on this term will be called "**denominator degrees of freedom (DF)**"

# Calculating the Skewness of Quantitative Variables (Asymmetry)

- **Skewness** is calculated with the same pattern, but cubed (without common special notation, btw):

$$\text{Skewness} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \left( \frac{y_i - \bar{y}}{s} \right)^3$$

→ Skewness will be 0 if the variable is symmetric



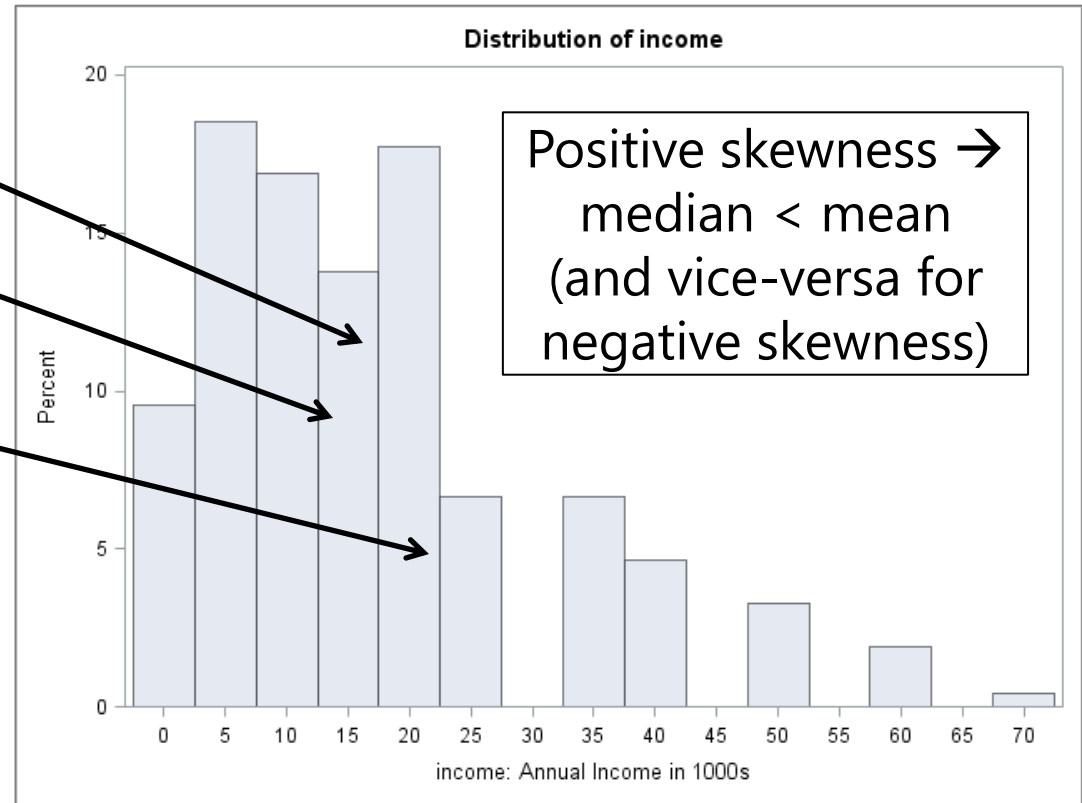
# Example: Skewness = 1.16 in Income

- **Central tendency:**

- Mean ( $M$ ) = 17.31
- Median = 13.48
  - Btw, = 50<sup>th</sup> percentile
- Mode = 22.05

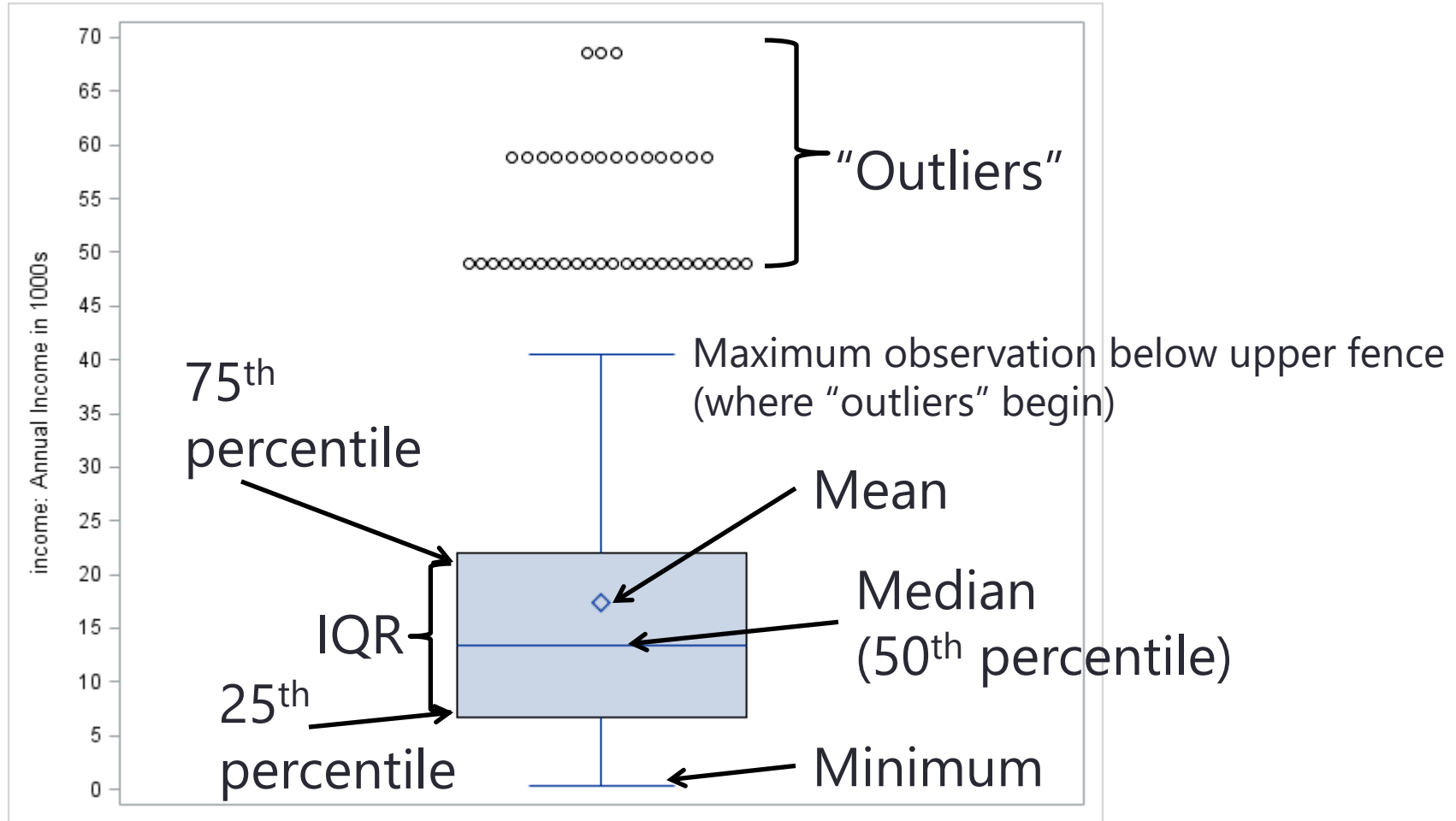
- **Dispersion:**

- $VAR = SD^2 = 190.21$
- $SD = 13.79$
- Inter-quartile range:
  - $IQR = 75^{th} - 25^{th}$  percentiles
  - $IQR = 22.05 - 6.74 = 15.31$



Should also report the **range**: the **minimum** and **maximum** values (0.245 and 68.60 here)

# Summarizing Skewed Quantitative Variables using a “**Box Plot**”

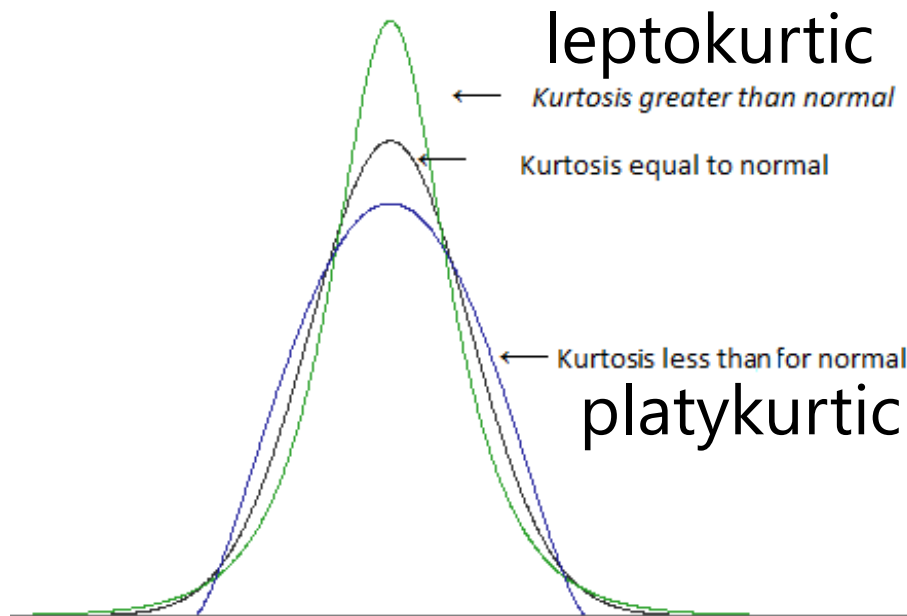


# Btw, One More Feature of Quantitative Variables: Kurtosis

- **Kurtosis** is calculated with the same pattern, but fourth-d:

$$\text{Kurtosis} = \frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N \left( \frac{y_i - \bar{y}}{s} \right)^4 - 3$$

→ Kurtosis will also be 0 if the variable is symmetric



Note: Extent of kurtosis is hard to differentiate from variance in real data, so don't worry about this one

# Describing Quantitative Variables: STATA

```
summarize income, detail // detail gives more info
```

income: Annual Income in 1000s

```
-----
      Percentiles      Smallest
  1%            .245          .245
  5%            .98          .245
 10%           2.695          .245      Obs              734
 25%           6.7375          .245      Sum of Wgt.         734

 50%           13.475

                                Mean          17.30287
                                Std. Dev.      13.79163
                                Variance        190.209
                                Skewness        1.15836
                                Kurtosis        4.086398
 75%           22.05          58.8
 90%           40.425          68.6
 95%            49           68.6
 99%           58.8           68.6
```

```
summarize income
```

```
-----+-----
Variable |      Obs      Mean    Std. Dev.      Min      Max
-----+-----
income  |      734    17.30287    13.79163      .245     68.6
```



# Describing Quantitative Variables: R

```
# describe (from psych package) prints sample descriptive statistics
# embedding describe in print allows control of number of digits printed
# quant= requests list of quantiles, IQR requests inter-quartile range
print(describe(x=Example1$income, quant=c(.25, .50, .75), IQR=TRUE), digits=4)
```

	vars	n	mean	sd	median	trimmed	mad	min	max	range
1	1	734	17.3029	13.7916	13.475	15.4929	12.7133	0.245	68.6	68.355

	skew	kurtosis	se	IQR	Q0.25	Q0.5	Q0.75
1	1.156	1.0753	0.5091	15.3125	6.7375	13.475	22.05

Note what's missing...  
Any guesses why?

```
# describe does not include variance, so here is a command to do so
var(Example1$income)
```

```
[1] 190.20905
```

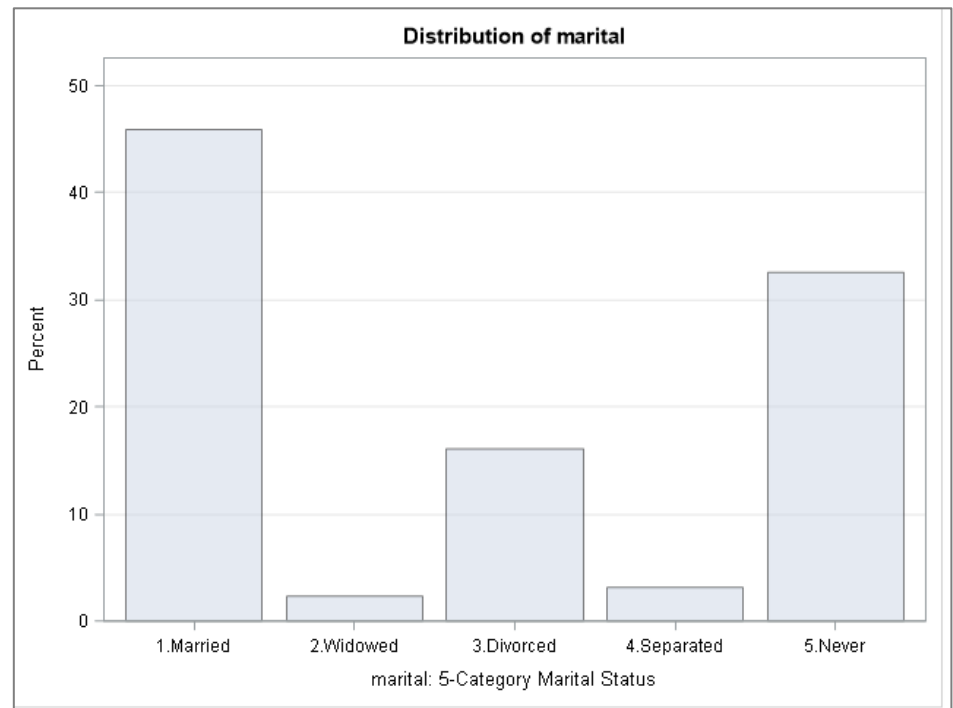
```
# likewise, here are commands to get the mean and SD by themselves
# can have more than one command on a line if separated by semi-colon
mean(Example1$income); sd(x=Example1$income)
```

```
[1] 17.302875
```

```
[1] 13.79163
```

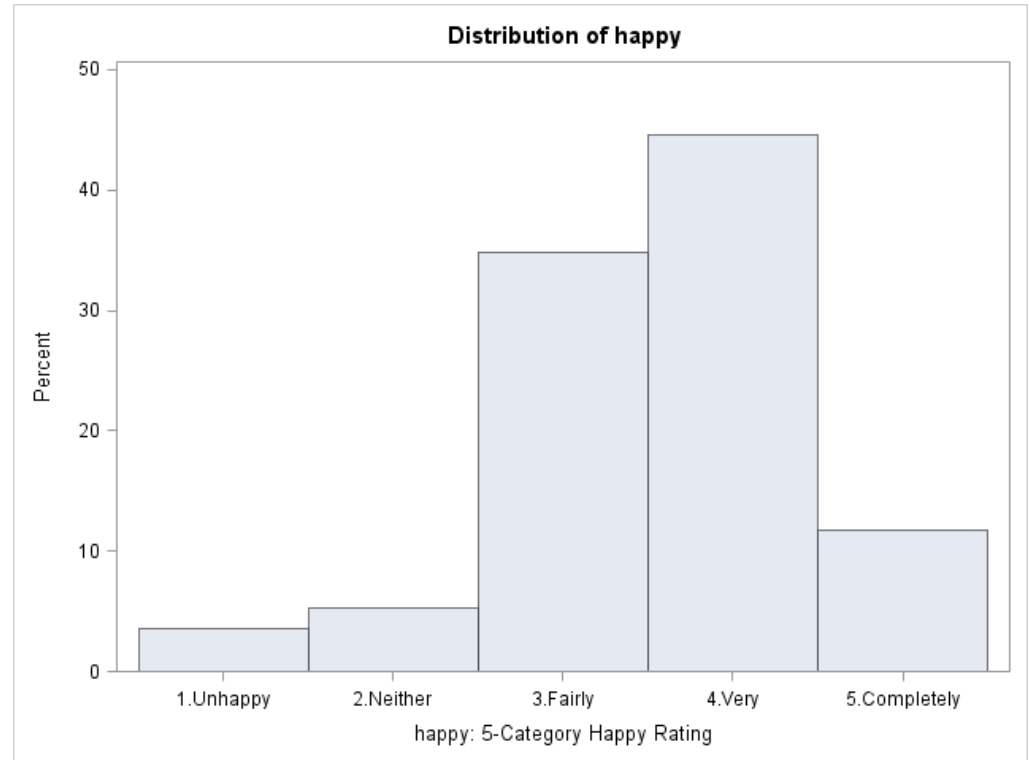
# Means for Categorical Variables?

- For **binary variables** (coded 0 or 1), **the mean** is calculated the same way but it **is called the "proportion"** instead
  - e.g., 0=alive, 1=dead? Mean = "death rate"
  - This is fine because there is only one interval to consider
- For **nominal variables** with 3+ options, **a single mean does not make sense!**
  - e.g., for nominal marital status,  $M = 2.74...$  ?!?
  - Software will give it to you anyway (user beware) 😊



# Means for Ordinal Variables?

- What about **means (or SDs) for ordinal variables?**
  - Should give you pause....
- For example, for **self-rated happiness on a 5-point scale:**
  - Mean ( $M$ ) = 3.56  
Median and Mode = 4
  - Known as “Likert scale”  
(Lick-ert, not Like-ert)
- Using a mean (or SD) **assumes equal distances between the options** (interval measurement)
  - *Stay tuned for how to think about ordinal predictors...*



# Variances for Categorical Variables?

- For **binary variables** (coded 0 or 1), variance and skewness are not separate properties (as they are in quantitative variables)
  - If  $p$  = proportion of 1 values, and  $q$  = proportion of 0 values:
  - Mean  $\bar{y} = p$ , variance  $s^2 = p * q$ , and skewness =  $\frac{1-2p}{\sqrt{p*q}}$

**Mean and Variance of a Binary Variable**

Mean ( $p$ )	.0	.1	.2	.3	.4	.5	.6	.7	.8	.9	1.0
Variance	.0	.09	.16	.21	.24	.25	.24	.21	.16	.09	.0

- For variables with >2 categories, **each pair of categories** would have its **own  $p$  and  $q$**  (and thus variance/skewness)
  - So the **percent for each category is enough to report** (i.e., the pairwise variance and skewness values are not helpful)

# Summary

- What kind of **univariate descriptive statistics** are relevant to report depends on the type of variable to be described:
  - **Quantitative variables (numbers are numbers):**
    - If “symmetric enough”: Min, Max, Mean, SD (or  $SD^2 = \text{variance}$ )
    - If not, add median (for central tendency) and IQR (for dispersion) that are “robust” to outliers (extreme values) or general skewness
    - Binned-value histograms, boxplots, or violin plots make good visuals
  - **Categorical variables (numbers are just labels):**
    - **Binary** (0 or 1): Mean (= proportion of 1 values); variance and skewness are then determined from the mean (i.e., they are redundant)
    - **Nominal** with **3+ categories**: **percentage** of each category; a single mean (or variance or skewness) makes no kind of sense
    - **Ordinal** with **3+ categories** may be treated as quantitative, but keep in mind this assumes equal distances between the numbers used as labels
    - Bar graphs of the percentage in each category make a good visual