

Marital Status Multistate Life Tables: Basic Concepts and Methods

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This paper discusses the basic concepts and the methods for estimating marital status multistate life tables used by the following papers in this special issue, as well as the meanings of the life course indicators derived from the tables. Further, the paper also discusses the advantages of using the average age at death derived from the marital status multistate life tables, while pointing out the problems associated with the indices based on actual populations.

Although there have been several studies on marital status multistate life tables in Japan, the comparative analyses of marriage behavior of populations encompassing different long-term periods have never been done due mainly to difficulties associated with the constructions of comparable multistate life tables using vastly different types of empirical data. In this paper we explain in a concise manner the basic concepts of and the methods and procedures commonly used for constructing marital status multistate life tables covering vastly different time periods of historical, contemporary, and future populations, together with the applicability of life course indicators derived from the tables.

The following papers in this special issue show the utility and effectiveness of the use of marital status multistate life tables discussed in this paper for studies of marriage behavior.

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