

Are administrative records an alternative to sample surveys? The case of the Italian Survey on Household income and Wealth

Andrea Neri*

Economic and Financial Statistics Department, Banca d'Italia, Rome, Italy,
andrea.neri@bancaditalia.it

Since 1965, Banca d'Italia is conducting a survey of household income and wealth (SHIW) to study the economic behaviors of Italian households. In the recent years, new sources of information have become available such as tax records, data on the ownership and the value of dwellings and data relating the financial assets and liabilities hold by households. In the paper, I discuss the experience of Banca d'Italia in the use of such administrative records for the analysis of household economic situation. I investigate the degree of "fitness for use" of any source of information using the following criteria: relevance, timelines, accuracy, accessibility, interpretability and coherence. I argue that administrative records cannot be considered as a viable alternative to survey data, at least in our case. Instead, a more useful research question is how to combine all the information available to fully exploit the benefits of each source.

Key Words: data quality, statistical matching, SHIW, administrative records