

svydescribe — Describe survey data[Description](#)[Remarks and examples](#)[Quick start](#)[Methods and formulas](#)[Menu](#)[References](#)[Syntax](#)[Also see](#)[Options](#)

Description

`svydescribe` displays a table that describes the strata and the sampling units for a given sampling stage in a survey dataset.

Quick start

Describe the stage 1 strata and sampling units

```
svydescribe
```

Describe the stage 2 strata and sampling units

```
svydescribe, stage(2)
```

Describe the final stage strata and sampling units

```
svydescribe, finalstage
```

Describe stage 1 strata, and report on where `x` contains missing values

```
svydescribe x
```

Create variable `onepsu` that identifies strata containing one sampling unit

```
svydescribe, generate(onepsu)
```

Show which strata have only one PSU for observations with nonmissing values of `x`

```
svydescribe x, single
```

Show which strata have only one PSU for observations in the estimation sample

```
svydescribe if e(sample), single
```

Menu

Statistics > Survey data analysis > Setup and utilities > Describe survey data

Syntax

```
svydescribe [varlist] [if] [in] [, options]
```

options

Description

Main

`stage(#)`sampling stage to describe; default is `stage(1)``finalstage`

display information per sampling unit in the final stage

`single`

display only the strata with one sampling unit

`generate(newvar)`

generate a variable identifying strata with one sampling unit

`svydescribe` requires that the survey design variables be identified using `svyset`; see [\[SVY\] svyset](#).

Options

Main

`stage(#)` specifies the sampling stage to describe. The default is `stage(1)`.

`finalstage` specifies that results be displayed for each sampling unit in the final sampling stage; that is, a separate line of output is produced for every sampling unit in the final sampling stage. This option is not allowed with `stage()`, `single`, or `generate()`.

`single` specifies that only the strata containing one sampling unit be displayed in the table.

`generate(newvar)` stores a variable that identifies strata containing one sampling unit for a given sampling stage.

Remarks and examples

[stata.com](https://www.stata.com)

Survey datasets are typically the result of a stratified survey design with cluster sampling in one or more stages. Within a stratum for a given sampling stage, there are sampling units, which may be either clusters of observations or individual observations.

`svydescribe` displays a table that describes the strata and sampling units for a given sampling stage. One row of the table is produced for each stratum. Each row contains the number of sampling units, the range and mean of the number of observations per sampling unit, and the total number of observations. If the `finalstage` option is specified, one row of the table is produced for each sampling unit of the final stage. Here each row contains the number of observations for the respective sampling unit.

If a `varlist` is specified, `svydescribe` reports the number of sampling units that contain at least one observation with complete data (that is, no missing values) for all variables in `varlist`. These are the sampling units that would be used to compute point estimates by using the variables in `varlist` with a given `svy` estimation command.

► Example 1: Strata with one sampling unit

We use data from the Second National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey (NHANES II) (McDowell et al. 1981) as our example. First, we set the PSU, `pweight`, and strata variables.

```
. use https://www.stata-press.com/data/r17/nhanes2b
. svyset psuid [pweight=finalwgt], strata(stratid)
Sampling weights: finalwgt
                  VCE: linearized
                  Single unit: missing
                  Strata 1: stratid
Sampling unit 1: psuid
                  FPC 1: <zero>
```

svydescribe will display the strata and PSU arrangement of the dataset.

```
. svydescribe
Survey: Describing stage 1 sampling units
Sampling weights: finalwgt
                 VCE: linearized
Single unit: missing
Strata 1: stratid
Sampling unit 1: psuid
FPC 1: <zero>
```

Stratum	# units	# obs	Number of obs per unit		
			Min	Mean	Max
1	2	380	165	190.0	215
2	2	185	67	92.5	118
3	2	348	149	174.0	199
<i>(output omitted)</i>					
17	2	393	180	196.5	213
18	2	359	144	179.5	215
20	2	285	125	142.5	160
21	2	214	102	107.0	112
<i>(output omitted)</i>					
31	2	308	143	154.0	165
32	2	450	211	225.0	239
31	62	10,351	67	167.0	288

Our NHANES II dataset has 31 strata (stratum 19 is missing) and two PSUs per stratum.

The `hdresult` variable contains serum levels of high-density lipoprotein (HDL). If we try to estimate the mean of `hdresult`, we get a missing value for the standard error estimate and a note explaining why.

```
. svy: mean hdresult
(running mean on estimation sample)
Survey: Mean estimation
Number of strata = 31          Number of obs =      8,720
Number of PSUs   = 60          Population size = 98,725,345
                                   Design df      =          29
```

	Linearized		
	Mean	std. err.	[95% conf. interval]
hdresult	49.67141	.	. .

Note: Missing standard error because of stratum with single sampling unit.

Running `svydescribe` with `hdresult` and the `single` option will show which strata have only one PSU.

```
. svydescribe hdresult, single
Survey: Describing strata with a single sampling unit in stage 1
Sampling weights: finalwgt
                  VCE: linearized
                  Single unit: missing
                  Strata 1: stratid
Sampling unit 1: psuid
                  FPC 1: <zero>
```

Stratum	Number of units		Number of obs with		# obs per included unit		
	included	omitted	complete data	missing data	Min	Mean	Max
1	1*	1	114	266	114	114.0	114
2	1*	1	98	87	98	98.0	98

2

Both `stratid = 1` and `stratid = 2` have only one PSU with nonmissing values of `hdresult`. Because this dataset has only 62 PSUs, the `finalstage` option produces a manageable amount of output:

```
. svydescribe hdresult, finalstage
Survey: Describing final stage sampling units
Sampling weights: finalwgt
                  VCE: linearized
                  Single unit: missing
                  Strata 1: stratid
Sampling unit 1: psuid
                  FPC 1: <zero>
```

Stratum	Unit	Number of obs with	
		complete data	missing data
1	1	0	215
1	2	114	51
2	1	98	20
2	2	0	67
<i>(output omitted)</i>			
32	2	203	8
31	62	8,720	1,631
		10,351	

It is rather striking that there are two PSUs with no values for `hdresult`. All other PSUs have only a moderate number of missing values. Obviously, here a data analyst should first try to ascertain why these data are missing. The answer here (C. L. Johnson, 1995, pers. comm.) is that HDL measurements could not be collected until the third survey location. Thus there are no `hdresult` data for the first two locations: `stratid = 1, psuid = 1` and `stratid = 2, psuid = 2`.

Assuming that we wish to go ahead and analyze the `hdresult` data, we must collapse strata—that is, merge them—so that every stratum has at least two PSUs with some nonmissing values. We can accomplish this by collapsing `stratid = 1` into `stratid = 2`. To perform the stratum collapse, we create a new strata identifier, `newstr`, and a new PSU identifier, `newpsu`.

```

. generate newstr = stratid
. generate newpsu = psuid
. replace newpsu = psuid + 2 if stratid == 1
(380 real changes made)
. replace newstr = 2 if stratid == 1
(380 real changes made)

```

svyset the new PSU and strata variables.

```

. svyset newpsu [pweight=finalwgt], strata(newstr)
Sampling weights: finalwgt
                  VCE: linearized
                  Single unit: missing
                  Strata 1: newstr
Sampling unit 1: newpsu
                  FPC 1: <zero>

```

Then use svydescribe to check what we have done.

```

. svydescribe hdresult, finalstage
Survey: Describing final stage sampling units
Sampling weights: finalwgt
                  VCE: linearized
                  Single unit: missing
                  Strata 1: newstr
Sampling unit 1: newpsu
                  FPC 1: <zero>

```

Stratum	Unit	Number of obs with	
		complete data	missing data
2	1	98	20
2	2	0	67
2	3	0	215
2	4	114	51
3	1	161	38
3	2	116	33
<i>(output omitted)</i>			
32	1	180	59
32	2	203	8
30	62	8,720	1,631
		10,351	

The new stratum, `newstr = 2`, has four PSUs, two of which contain some nonmissing values of `hdresult`. This is sufficient to allow us to estimate the mean of `hdresult` and get a nonmissing standard-error estimate.

```
. svy: mean hresult
(running mean on estimation sample)
Survey: Mean estimation
Number of strata = 30          Number of obs =      8,720
Number of PSUs   = 60          Population size = 98,725,345
                                Design df      =           30
```

	Linearized			[95% conf. interval]
	Mean	std. err.		
hresult	49.67141	.3830147	48.88919	50.45364

◀

► Example 2: Using e(sample) to find strata with one sampling unit

Some estimation commands drop observations from the estimation sample when they encounter collinear predictors or perfect predictors. Ascertaining which strata contain one sampling unit is therefore difficult. We can then use `if e(sample)` instead of `varlist` when faced with the problem of strata with one sampling unit. We revisit the previous analysis to illustrate.

```
. use https://www.stata-press.com/data/r17/nhanes2b, clear
. svy: mean hresult
(running mean on estimation sample)
Survey: Mean estimation
Number of strata = 31          Number of obs =      8,720
Number of PSUs   = 60          Population size = 98,725,345
                                Design df      =           29
```

	Linearized			[95% conf. interval]
	Mean	std. err.		
hresult	49.67141	.	.	.

Note: Missing standard error because of stratum with single sampling unit.

```
. svydescribe if e(sample), single
Survey: Describing strata with a single sampling unit in stage 1
Sampling weights: finalwgt
                  VCE: linearized
                  Single unit: missing
                  Strata 1: stratid
Sampling unit 1: psuid
                  FPC 1: <zero>
```

Stratum	# units	# obs	Number of obs per unit		
			Min	Mean	Max
1	1*	114	114	114.0	114
2	1*	98	98	98.0	98

◀

Methods and formulas

See [Eltinge and Sribney \(1996\)](#) for an earlier implementation of `svydescribe`.

References

- Eltinge, J. L., and W. M. Sribney. 1996. `svy3`: Describing survey data: Sampling design and missing data. *Stata Technical Bulletin* 31: 23–26. Reprinted in *Stata Technical Bulletin Reprints*, vol. 6, pp. 235–239. College Station, TX: Stata Press.
- McDowell, A., A. Engel, J. T. Massey, and K. Maurer. 1981. Plan and operation of the Second National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey, 1976–1980. *Vital and Health Statistics* 1(15): 1–144.

Also see

- [SVY] [svy](#) — The survey prefix command
- [SVY] [svyset](#) — Declare survey design for dataset
- [SVY] [Survey](#) — Introduction to survey commands
- [SVY] [Variance estimation](#) — Variance estimation for survey data