



## Teaching students quantitative methods using resources from the British Birth Cohorts

### Opening, Saving and Merging data files in SPSS

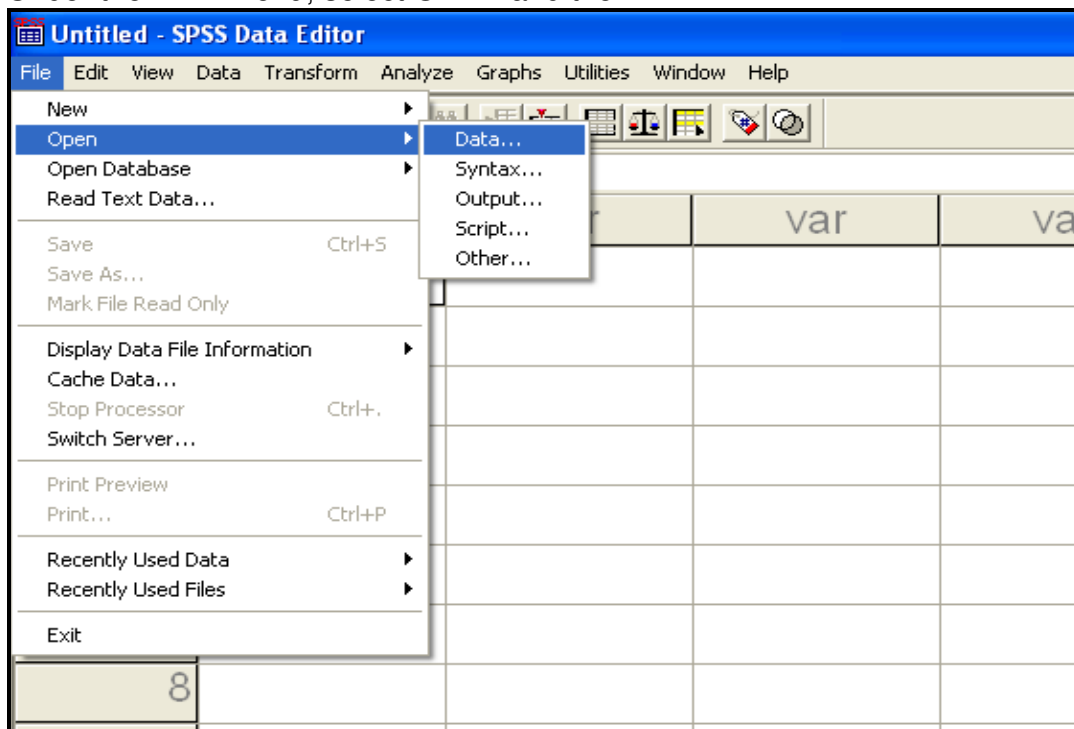
This document, **OpeningData\_SPSS.doc**, details

- 1) how to open a data file in SPSS
- 2) how to save a subset of the variables from the data file into a new data file
- 3) how to merge two data files

We use the drop down menus to illustrate how to do it, but the accompanying SPSS syntax is also included. Students may prefer the 'drop down' menus approach at first, but more confident students will find that copying and editing the syntax is a much quicker way of doing it.

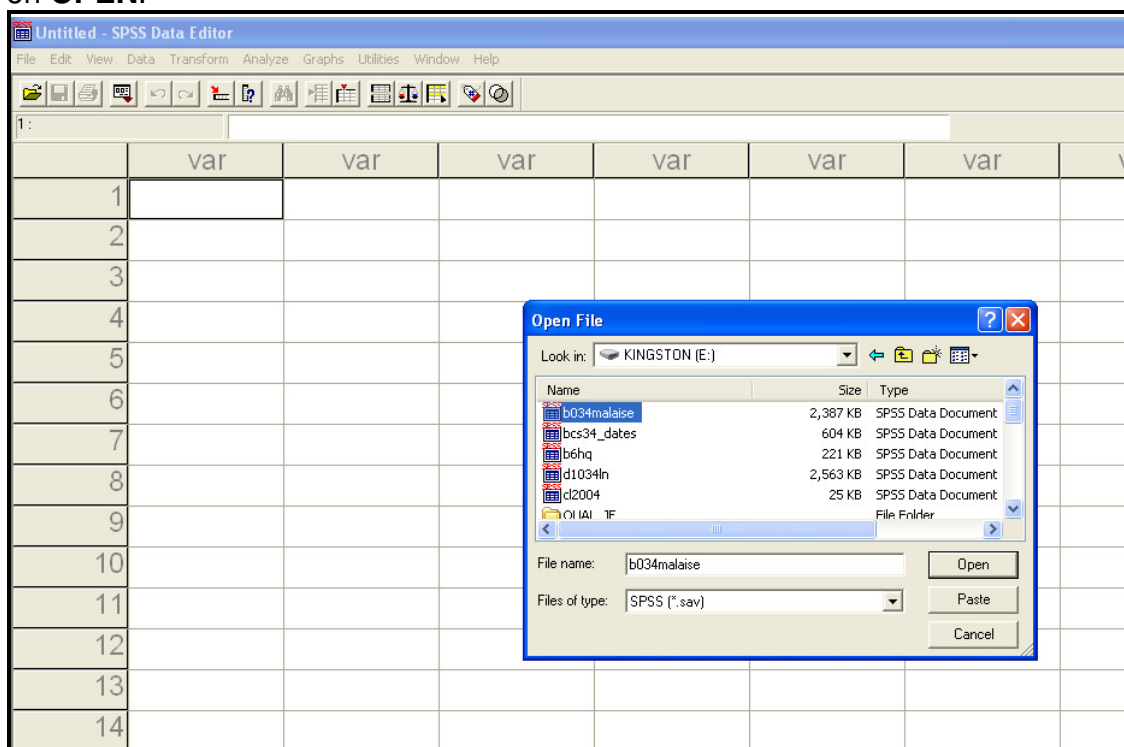
#### 1. Opening a data file

Under the **FILE** menu, select **OPEN** and then **DATA**



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In the new window that opens, click on the data file **b034malaise.sav** and then on **OPEN**.



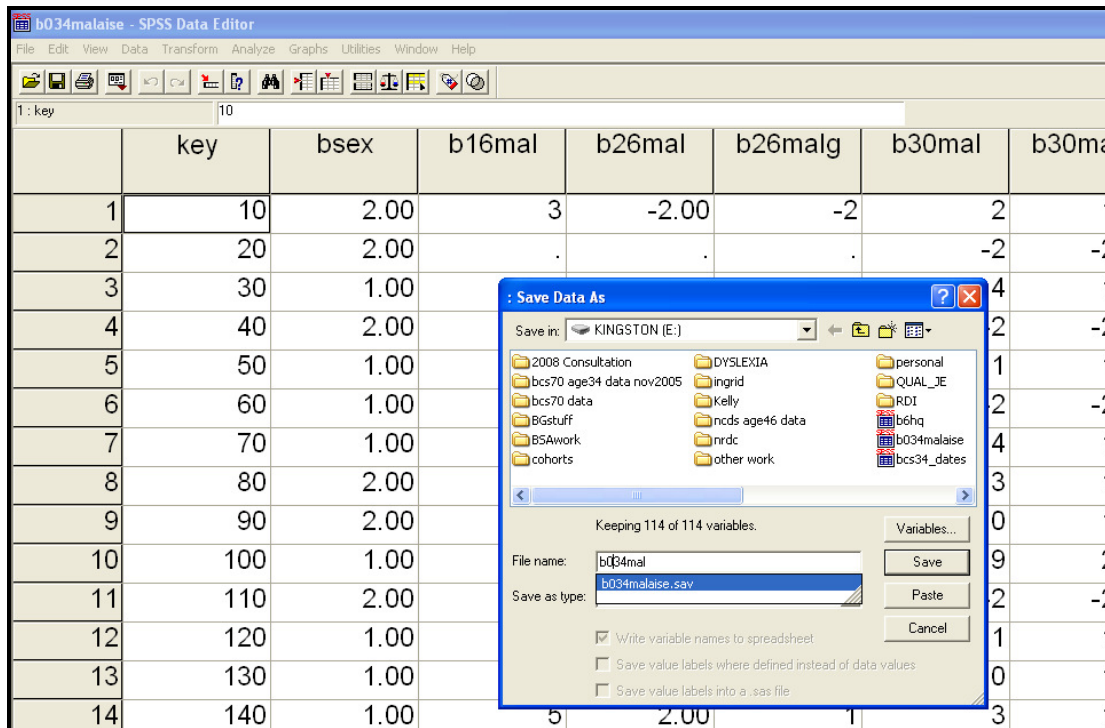
If PASTE is selected instead of OPEN, a syntax window will open with the following syntax command written in it

```
GET  
FILE='E:\b034malaise.sav'.
```

## 2. Saving a subset of variables into a new data file

The example below selects the summary malaise scores at each age point from the **b034malaise.sav** data file.

Under the **FILE** menu, select **SAVE AS** and a new window will open. Write the name you want to give the new data file in the empty **FILE NAME** box (e.g b034mal).



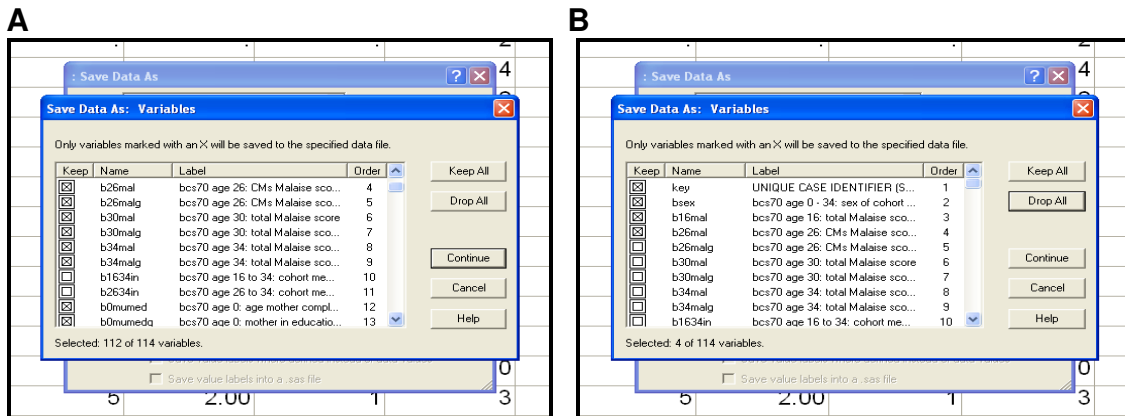
To select the variables that you want click on **VARIABLES**. By default, all variables will be saved. Either

A) deselect the variables that you don't want to save by clicking on the individual boxes next to each variable, or

B) click on **DROP ALL** and select the individual variables that you want to save

**!!** When saving data it is vital to remember to save the unique identifier that is included in the dataset. This could be a persons name, a number or a combination of numbers and letters, etc. In BCS70 the unique identifier is the **KEY** variable.

If the KEY variable is not included in a dataset, new information cannot be merged into the data file.



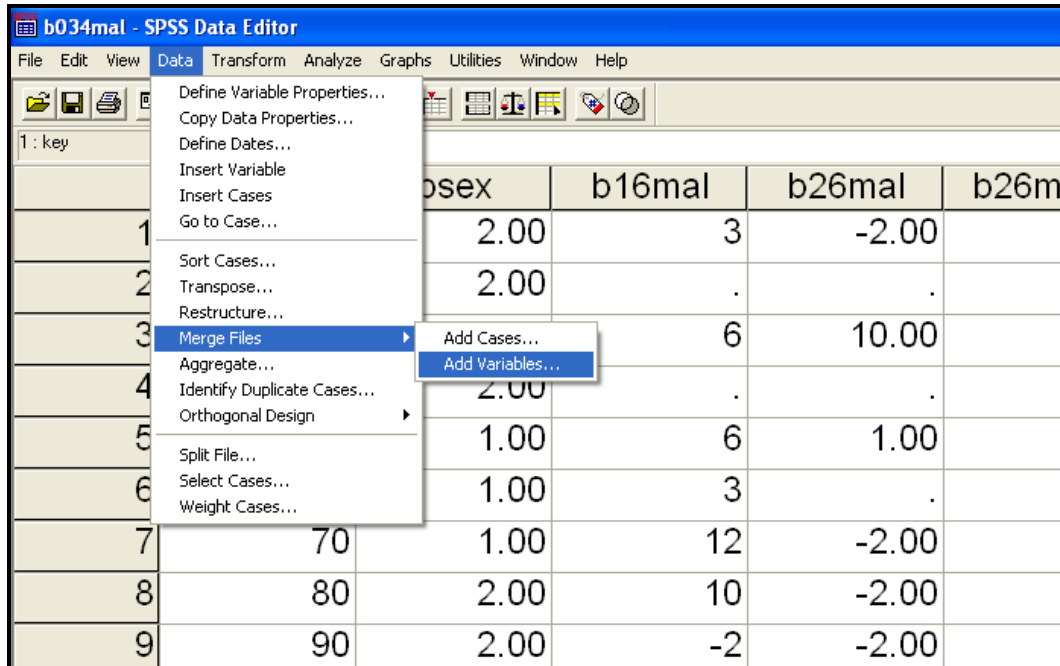
After you have selected the variables you want in your new data file, click on **CONTINUE** and then **SAVE**.

If PASTE is selected instead of SAVE, the following syntax command will be pasted into a new or open syntax file

```
SAVE OUTFILE='E:\b034mal.sav'
/DROP=b1634in b2634in b0mumed b0mumedg b0daded b0dadedg b0fsoc
b0msoc b0psoc b0bwght b0bwghtg b5fsoc b5msoc b5psoc b10fsoc
b10msoc b10psoc b16fsoc b16msoc b16psoc b26soc b30soc b34soc b34hq5
b34hq13 b34lefted b16mal01 b16mal02 b16mal03 b16mal04
b16mal05 b16mal06 b16mal07 b16mal08 b16mal09 b16mal10 b16mal11
b16mal12 b16mal13 b16mal14 b16mal15 b16mal16 b16mal17
b16mal18 b16mal19 b16mal20 b16mal21 b16mal22 b26mal01 b26mal02
b26mal03 b26mal04 b26mal05 b26mal06 b26mal07 b26mal08
b26mal09 b26mal10 b26mal11 b26mal12 b26mal13 b26mal14 b26mal15
b26mal16 b26mal17 b26mal18 b26mal19 b26mal20 b26mal21
b26mal22 b26mal23 b26mal24 b30mal01 b30mal02 b30mal03 b30mal04
b30mal05 b30mal06 b30mal07 b30mal08 b30mal09 b30mal10
b30mal11 b30mal12 b30mal13 b30mal14 b30mal15 b30mal16 b30mal17
b30mal18 b30mal19 b30mal20 b30mal21 b30mal22 b30mal23
b30mal24 b34mal02 b34mal03 b34mal05 b34mal09 b34mal12 b34mal14
b34mal16 b34mal20 b34mal21 /COMPRESSED.
```

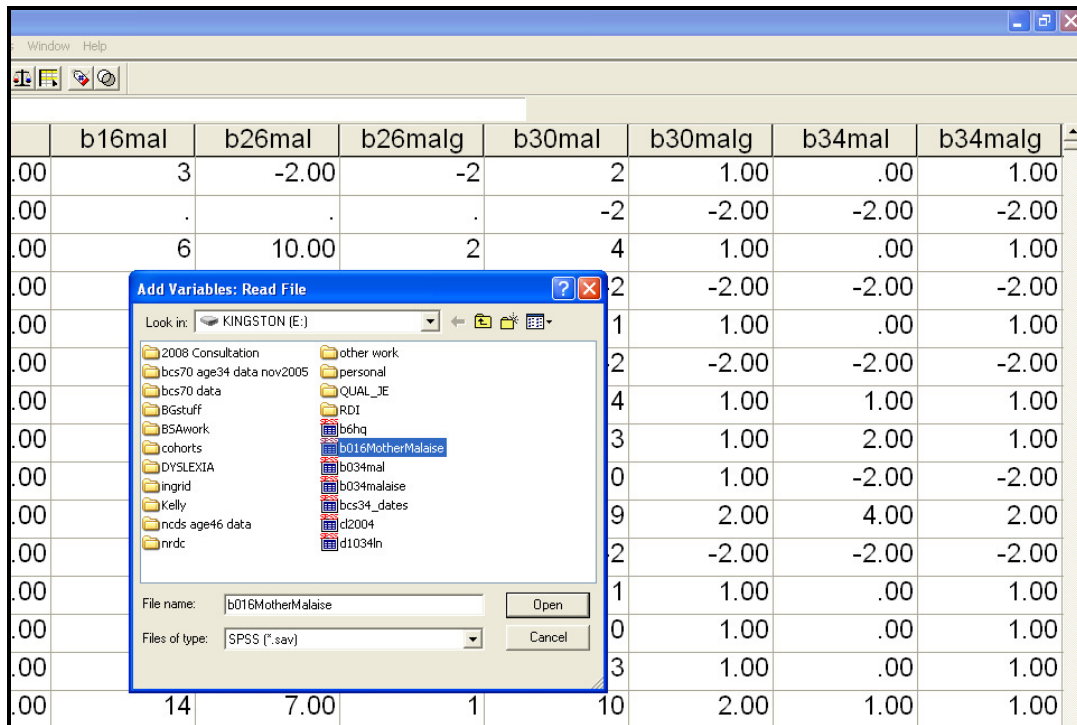
### 3. Merging two data files in SPSS

First open a data file (See 1. Note: once a data file is open in SPSS it is known as *the 'Working Data File'*). To add new information (variables) into your existing dataset, under the **DATA** menu, click on **MERGE FILES** and then **ADD VARIABLES**



In the new window select the data file to be merged into b034mal.sav from the file directory and then click on OPEN.

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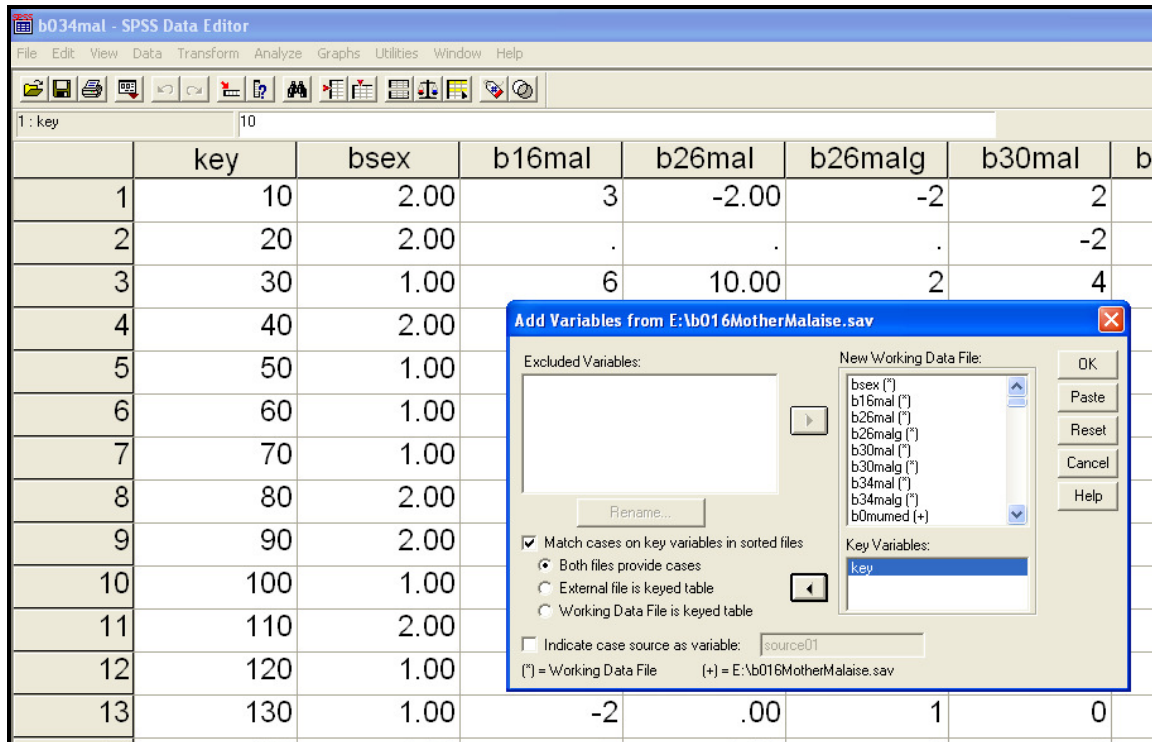


A new window will open. On the left hand side is 'excluded variables' on the right hand side 'new working data file'. All unique variables in the two data files will appear on the right hand side under 'new working data file'. Variables from the working data file (b034mal.sav) are identified with an asterisk (\*). If you scroll down this list of variables, variables from the external data file (b016MotherMalaise.sav) are identified with a plus sign (+). These are the variables that we want to add to our working data file.

On the left hand side of the new window, Key (+) will be in the 'Excluded Variables' box. This is because the 'Key' variable appears in both data files. Information on the same individuals is held in both files. The only way to ensure the information held in one data file is correctly matched to the information on the same individuals in the other data file is to merge the files by the Key variable.

Highlight Key(+) in the 'Excluded Variables' box and then click on the **'match cases on key variables in sorted files'** box. The default position is that **'both files provide cases'**. Next, click on the ► to move the **Key** variable into the **'Key Variables'** box. Click on OK to merge the two data files.

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If PASTE is selected instead of OK, the following syntax command will be pasted into a new or open syntax file

```
MATCH FILES /FILE=*
/FILE='E:\b016MotherMalaise.sav'
/BY key.
EXECUTE.
```

The new data file can be given the same name as the original data file b034mal, or saved under a new name. To do this, under the **FILE** menu, select **SAVE AS** and a new window will open. Write the name you want to give the new data file in the empty **FILE NAME** box (e.g b034malb) and click save.