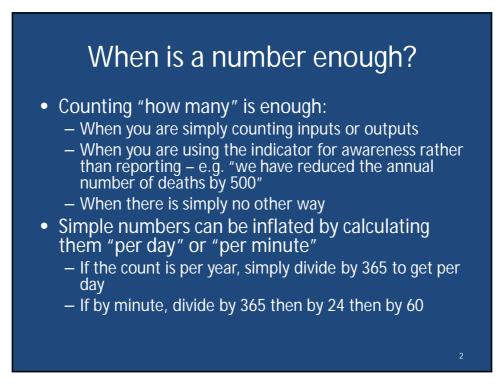
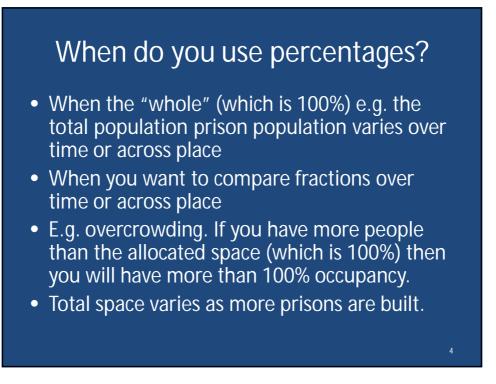
Constructing Indicators

Technical details 21 May 2015



What are percentages?

- A percentage is simply an "easy-to-understand" fraction "out of 100"
- Sometimes fractions are more understandable or easier for advocacy
 - 1 in 8 adults is arrested each year = 12.5%
- The percentage of the prison population which is pre-trial is the often called (slightly incorrectly) the pre-trial rate or ratio
- To calculate it:
 - number of pre-trial prisoners divided by total number prisoners; multiply the answer by 100.



What are rates?

- Rates are very similar to percentages, except instead of "per 100" you use "per 100 000 people in the country" or something similar
- So the pre-trial rate "per 100 000" is simply the number of pre-trial detainees, divided by the total population of the country and then multiplied by 100 000
- Rates per 100 000 population shows how common pretrial detention is amongst the country's population
- Using rates you can compare countries and within countries over long time periods

Why and how do we sample?

- Lack of data about the whole population (all prisoners, all claimants) means we must often use sample data
- We can sample
 - people in prison as at a date ("snapshot")
 - admissions to prisons
 - releases from prisons
- Each kind of sample tells us something slightly different as it refers to a different population

Ideally we want a representative sample

- This is an unbiased (representative) sample chosen from the total population we want to know about
- We need to use a selection process that is random
- This means no part of the population has a greater chance of being selected than any other part – this should make the sample representative
- If we have a representative sample of data, we can make population estimates about the whole population
- For each record selected for the sample, we note all the details we are interested in e.g. duration of detention

Measuring duration of detention

 Usually prisons at least keep the date of admission of a detainee

- If you have today's date and the date of admission then you can calculate the duration
- Excel will do it for you as long as you specify each column as a date
- The duration column is then the one date subtracted from the other
- If you can record for all prisoners great
- Otherwise draw a sample
- Sort the data from biggest to smallest to get median