



## SPSS Tip 21.1

### *Factor(s) or Covariate(s)* ■■■■

You might wonder why we didn't drag **Surgery** to the *Factors* box, given that it is a categorical variable. If you have a categorical variable and you place it in the *Factor(s)* box then SPSS will convert it into dummy variables for you and place these dummy variables into the model. If you place it into the *Covariate(s)* box it will treat it as a linear trend. In this example, we have already coded **Surgery** as a dummy variable (i.e., 0 and 1) and so it's fine to specify it as a covariate (and it makes the output a bit tidier for reasons that I won't bore you with). However, if your categorical variable had more than two categories you should certainly drag it into *Factor(s)* (and if you try out the end-of-chapter tasks you'll see that we do this). The exception is if you have ordered categories. In the second example we have a variable representing different time points. Technically, this variable is a categorical variable with four levels (each representing a point in time), but because it represents four equally spaced time points we would again treat it as a covariate because by doing so we'd be looking at the linear trend of time (rather than each time point against a baseline).

