



Increasing Response Rates in Difficult to Reach Populations

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Changes in Population

- Our nation's minority population totaled 98 million (~1/3 of population) in 2005
 - Largest minority group = Hispanics (42.7 million)
 - Second largest minority group = Blacks (39.7 million)
- In 2004, 37 million people were in poverty, up 1.1 million from 2003



Response Rate Challenges

- Mobility – Hispanics and Blacks were more likely to move than non-Hispanic Whites between 1995 and 2000 (Census)
 - Young also more likely to move – Over 1/3 of ALL movers between 1995 and 2000 were 25-39 years old
- Telephone access – Some without telephone service and increasing number of individuals with cell phone only
 - Current Population Survey (CPS) – Hispanics had highest level of cell-only followed by Black, non-Hispanic



Tracking Respondents

- Need for tracking respondents due to these challenges in mobility and telephone service
 - Changes in address
 - Absence of phone service
 - Use of cellular phone as primary
 - Disconnects



Tracking Challenges

- Low quality or old sample information
- Absence of credit history or other information (social security #, driver's licenses) that could be used in searches
- Inexperienced tracking staff
- Cost of field tracking



Gaining Cooperation

- Once the sample member is located, there may still be challenges in gaining cooperation
 - Personal benefit – What’s in it for me?
 - Time demands – Working multiple jobs, caring for children, etc.
 - Trust issues regarding the data they provide and with the interviewers – What will you do with this information? How did you get my name?



Oversampling Populations

- Lower response rates among some subgroups require higher sampling rates to achieve desired N

Random Digit Dialing vs. List Frame

- Random Digit Dialing (RDD)
 - Challenge of the screener
 - Refusal at the screener level
 - Credibility
 - Heightened suspicion about source (how did you get my number?)
 - Within-household randomization challenges (choosing the correct respondent)

- List Frame with Respondent Name
 - Respondents familiarity with the study/program
 - Established rapport/assumption
 - Follow-up contact versus cold-call



Overcoming the obstacles

- Establish a tracking plan early
- Quality of staff – recruitment & training
 - Sensitive to population
 - Experienced communicators
 - Ability to convert refusals
 - Locating skills (field staff and tracers)
- Introduction of study (advance letter, radio or news ads, community based org.)
- Caller id TAG that is honest but neutral
- Provide incentives



Innovative Methods

- Increased use of mixed-mode; i.e., in-person to supplement phone/web
- Provide for inbound call options (so R can call after message screening)
- Opening Doors Fair
- Jobs Plus Fair
- Finder's Fees

References

- www.census.gov
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