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# Gaining Cooperation in a Multi-Mode Study of African-Americans

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### Presentation Objective:

- Describe the development and implementation of cooperation strategies
- Examine the incentives
- Response rates and participation in additional projects
- Outcomes and challenges

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Overview of the

Mid-Life in the U.S. National Study (MIDUS) of Health and Well-being (Milwaukee, WI oversample):

- Sample: An over sample designed to increase urban, minority representation of 35 to 85 year-olds in the study
- Modes: CAPI (computer-assisted in-person interview), SAQ (self-administered questionnaire), and Cognitive (CATI or computer-assisted telephone)
- Content: Used to collect data to identify the major biomedical, psychological, and social factors that permit some people to achieve good health, psychological well-being, and social responsibility during their adult years

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### CAPI Design:

- Listed 78 census blocks in Milwaukee county to create the sample frame
- Screened households by age and race
- 3565 households were screened to reach 838 age and race eligible respondents (73.4 % screen-out rate)
- “Quota groups” by age and gender ensured consistent representation of males and females aged 35-54 and 55-85 years.
- 592 in-person interviews were completed (70.7%)
- Interviewers gave \$50 cash incentive on completion

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## SAQ Design:

- All 592 respondents were handed 50-page SAQs by their CAPI interviewers
- Interviewers encouraged completion of the SAQ and offered their business card if the R needed assistance
- Rs were mailed a check for \$20 upon completion
- Non-responders (after 3 waves) of the SAQ were visited in-person by the interviewers and were asked to complete the booklet with the interviewer
- SAQ response rate: (396 completed) 66.8%

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### Cognitive Telephone Interview Design:

- All 592 Rs were called to ask for their participation in a 30-minute cognitive testing telephone interview
- Respondents were asked to engage in memory and problem-solving tasks
- Response timings were recorded for the tasks
- Rs were not given an incentive
- Cognitive response rate: (307 completed) 52%

## Cooperation Strategies: Initial Development

- Pre-testing the incentives
  - The incentive was increased from \$40 to a more salient \$50
  - Cash was confirmed as preferred by respondents
- Focus on establishing “memory points”
  - Study name, logo, colors
  - Drawing connections to the local community, city, and state
    - Diverse interviewing staff with local residency
    - Notifying community and church leaders, liaison officers, professors
    - Focus on University of Wisconsin research; Milwaukee population only; “you and other African-Americans”

## Cooperation Strategies: Case Assignment

- Interviewer case assignment / exchange
  - Identifying and flexibly moving cases from one interviewer to another to address respondent's preferences or as a refusal conversion strategy
  - Moving cases from male to female interviewer, from white to black interviewer, and vice versa
  - Some assignments based on interviewer personality (patient, speedy, neighborhood-specific)





## Cooperation Strategies: Adapting token incentives

- Mid-stream development of adaptive token incentives
  - Debriefed interviewers about what scripts are gaining cooperation from whom
  - Decided to use persuasion and conversion incentives designed for specific groups
    - Upper-income refusal (screened-in, known eligible)
    - Lower-income refusal (screened-in, known eligible)
    - Persistently unavailable (screened and not yet screened)

Cooperation Strategies: Adaptive token incentives *(continued)*

- For lower income cases, mailing a unique letter with a MIDUS logo stress ball in a USPS Priority mailing box.
- For upper income cases, mailing a unique letter with the University of Wisconsin official seal folder containing Dr. David R. Williams' anthology article on "Health and the Quality of Life Among African Americans" and an interviewer business card
- For persistently unavailable cases, mailing a unique letter with MIDUS logo post-its

## Cooperation Strategies: Interviewer resources

- Cases were labeled for interviewers to identify which treatment was used
- Interviewers carried each of the treatment elements (letters, stress balls, folders with article, post-its)
- Interviewers used the tokens as props to remind the Rs of the mailing and/or gave them directly to Rs
- At interviewers' discretion, different tokens could be used to persuade Rs

### Conclusion: Positive Outcomes

- Interviewers were better able to establish rapport with respondents
  - Comfortable willingness to look at how their race, gender, and personality can affect cooperation
  - Understanding the importance of adaptive strategies
- Respondents kept business cards and contacted interviewers later for assistance with SAQs and check incentive payments
- Good response rates for each phase (CAPI, SAQ, Cognitive)
- Early indicators point towards good cooperation rates in additional data collection efforts (biomedical testing on UW-Madison campus)



## Questions and Comments

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