



Workshop on Developing a Methodological Research Program for Longitudinal Studies

Cost Considerations and Cost Effectiveness Measures Specific to Longitudinal Studies

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Focus

- Experience from ongoing cost-related projects
- What are some cost considerations that are unique to longitudinal studies and would deserve more attention than they are currently afforded?
- What types of cost information would be useful to track that is currently not typically tracked?
- What cost data could be shared with the sponsor and others while respecting the proprietary nature of some of this information?
- What research is needed about the cost implications of various methods and tradeoffs in longitudinal studies?

National Social Life Health and Aging Project (NSHAP)

- Nationally representative community-residing sample
- Three Waves of Field Work Completed
 - 2005-2006; n = 3,005 completed interviews
 - 2010-2011; n = 3,377 (added partners)
 - 2015-2016; n = 4,777 (added new cohort)
- Inperson Interview
 - ~2 Hour CAPI Interview
 - Extensive biomeasure collection
 - Leave Behind Questionnaire
- In Progress
 - Medicare linkage (using MedRIC)
 - National Death Index

Revisiting the Budget Each Wave/Round (1)

- Always looking for efficiencies/budget savings
- Is the sample design remaining constant? (e.g., any reduction in the sample size, subsampling of specific groups, etc.)
- Mode(s) – same as before? New modes?
- Changes to the questionnaire and other data (e.g., biomeasures, health records, utility bills, financial records, transcripts, etc.)
- Pre-field locating
- Following movers – how far?
- Field duration vs. number of interviewers
- Remote vs. inperson training (not all costs/benefits are easily quantifiable)

Revisiting the Budget Each Wave/Round (2)

- Specimen collection and assay costs
- Fixed vs. variable costs
 - Development and testing costs (mostly fixed)
 - Research/survey staff (mostly fixed, relatively inelastic)

Looking for Efficiencies (1)

- Mode – can some/all of the sample be moved to a cheaper mode?
- Can the questionnaire/interview be shortened
 - Demographics and other static data items
 - Dropping unused or rarely used variables
 - Preloading information from prior interviews to speed the interview
- Technology
 - New possibilities (e.g., passive measurement [timestamps, CARI], GPS, Skype/Facetime, scanning)
- Staff – seeking optimal blend
 - Project experience
 - Mix (switch senior for junior?)
- Recycling training materials/forms/programs/processes

Looking for Efficiencies (2)

- Sharing, avoid reinventing
 - Sharing data (e.g., HRS → NSHAP sample)
 - Sharing (expensive) equipment
 - Sharing protocols and other materials (NSHAP ↔ HRS)
 - Sharing experience
- Alternative/cheaper sources of data (e.g., administrative data, EHRs)

What Deserves More Attention (1)

- Exploring different periodicity, possibly mixed with different modes
 - Continuous data collection?
- Real cost implications of ‘cheaper’ modes
 - System development and testing
 - Questionnaire development and testing
 - Training
 - Staff and resources for back-end processing (e.g., data file cleaning, merging)
- Chasing high response rates
 - Cost of those last few cases
 - Adaptive design
- Cost vs. quality of data collection via the mail
 - Leave behind questionnaires (LBQ)
 - Specimen collection (e.g., saliva)
 - Actigraphy

What Deserves More Attention (2)

- Training
 - Remote vs. inperson
 - Experienced vs. new interviewers
- Staying connected with respondents
 - Between round outreach to respondents – what works best?
- Leveraging new methods for staying connected/communicating/interviewing
 - Email, text, instant messenger
 - Skype, Facetime, WhatsApp
 - What do the respondents want?

What Deserves More Attention (3)

- Incentives
 - Appropriate incentive level for the burden
 - Respondent expectations from prior interviews
 - Interviewer flexibility to adjust incentives
 - ‘Early bird’ respondents
 - Non-monetary incentives
- Bulk purchasing power across studies
 - Specimen equipment
 - Assays

Sharing Cost Data

- Competitive environment
- Different metrics used across organizations
 - Hours per Case (HPC), Cost per Case (CPC)
 - Cost code structure and reliability
 - What's included/excluded?
- Scope and methods vary enormously across surveys
 - Apples-to-apples?
 - National Children's Study experience

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Thank You!



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