

Asking the Right Questions:

An Introduction to PHMC's SEPA Household Health Survey & Survey Data Collection

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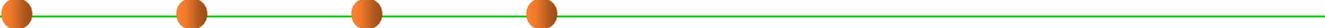


Purpose of this session

- 
- This session will provide an overview of PHMC's Household Health Survey and will help you make the following decisions about collecting survey data:
 - When to conduct a survey
 - What type of survey to use
 - How to construct a good questionnaire
 - How to administer the survey to get the best results



About PHMC



Philadelphia Health Management Corporation (PHMC) is a non-profit public health agency offering a diverse mix of programs and services. (www.phmc.org)

Addictions Services

Health Promotion and Disease Prevention

Criminal Justice Treatment Initiatives

Early Intervention Service for Infants and Toddlers

HIV/AIDS Prevention (education and outreach)

Nurse Managed Care

Services to Homeless and other specialized groups

Research and Evaluation (R&E)



The Household Health Survey

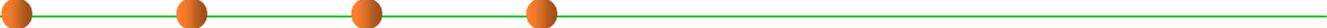


PHMC has conducted the Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey since 1983. Since 1994, the survey has been fielded every other year.

The most recent survey was conducted in 2006. Previous survey years are: 1983, 1987, 1991, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2002, and 2004.



Sample Size & Geography



The Southeastern Pennsylvania Household Health Survey includes interviews in **more than 10,000 households in the region.**

An additional 3,000 interviews are conducted regarding children living in those households—for a **total of 13,000+ interviews.**



Why Collect Primary Data?

- 
- Obtain information not available from existing sources
 - Complement information from existing sources
 - Obtain in-depth information about a topic of interest
 - Involve consumers in program evaluation and development
 - Important public health or public policy value



What Data Collection Methods are Commonly Used?

- 
- Secondary data
 - Vital statistics, Census, etc.
 - Review of existing records
 - Other local, state, or national data

 - Primary data (quantitative or qualitative)
 - Surveys
 - Focus groups
 - Key informant interviews
 - Street-intercept interviews
 - Testing (pre/post)
 - Observations
- The Method you choose depends on information needs and resources available.

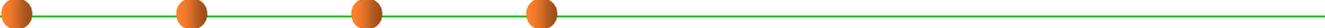


Types of Surveys | Pros & Cons

- 
- Mail
 - Telephone
 - In-person
 - Staff-administered interview
 - Self-administered
 - Online/Internet
 - Combination of two or more methods



Mapping Your Project



■ Know where you are headed

- Plan out survey design, start to finish
- Exactly what are you trying to find out?
 - Clear research question(s)
- Identify target population & participant recruitment
- Obtain IRB approval (if needed)



Mapping Your Project (Cont.)

- 
- Survey implementation
 - Pilot testing
 - Review & revision
 - Coding and data processing
 - Who is your target audience?
 - Thesis, hard copy report, journal publication, press releases, community meetings?



Getting People to Participate In a Survey & Survey Timing

- 
- How often do you want to conduct the survey
 - When to field the survey (seasonal issues)
 - Make it convenient for participants
 - Survey length (response rate)
 - Consistency
 - Use of incentives
 - Intervening events that could impact survey (e.g., SEPTA strike, Census year)

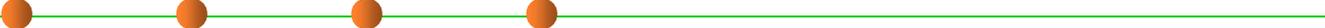


Questionnaire Development: Issues to Consider

- 
- Question content
 - Question wording
 - Form of response
 - Question order
 - Layout or format

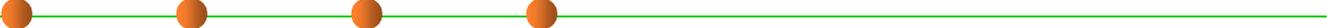


Before Writing Your Own Survey

- 
- Creating an instrument is difficult and time-consuming
 - Look for existing surveys (or questions) to meet your needs
 - Existing instruments are not necessarily good quality and may not meet your needs
 - Be careful of modifications—especially with standardized scales
 - You may need permission from the authors
 - May involve payment
 - Existing instruments have been tested (or at least used)

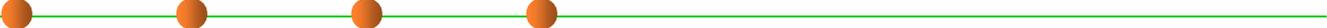


Question Content

- 
- What kind of question are you asking?
 - KAP/KAB framework
 - Socio-demographics
 - How will the answers be used?
 - Do respondents have the necessary knowledge or experience to answer?
 - Is the question on a sensitive topic or threatening?
 - Is the question necessary?



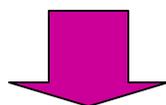
Question Wording

- 
- Be specific
 - General questions yield general information
 - Time frame (for recall), if appropriate
 - Place frame, if relevant

Question Wording: Framing – EXAMPLE

POOR QUESTION

How many cigarettes
have you smoked
recently?

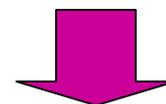


STRONG QUESTION

During the last week,
have you smoked
any cigarettes?

POOR QUESTION

Where were you
born?



STRONG QUESTIONS

In what country were
you born?

In what city were
you born?



Question Wording

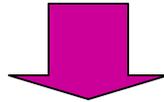
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-
-
-
- Be specific
 - General questions yield general information
 - More than one question might be needed
 - Time frame (for recall), if appropriate
- Keep it simple
 - Ask one thing at a time (No **double-barreled** questions)
 - No complex sentences
 - No jargon
 - No double negatives

Question Wording: Break It Down – EXAMPLE

Double-barrelled  Break it into two (or more)!

POOR QUESTION:

- Do you approve or disapprove of abortion in cases of incest or threats to the mother's health?



STRONGER QUESTIONS:

- Do you approve or disapprove of abortion in cases of incest?
- Do you approve or disapprove of abortion in cases of threat to the mother's health?



Question Wording (Cont.)

- 
- Be neutral
 - Avoid loaded language
 - Avoid leading questions

Question Wording: Leading – EXAMPLE

LEADING QUESTION:

Don't you agree that public health workers should earn more money than they currently earn?

- Yes, they should earn more
- No, they should not earn more
- Don't know / No opinion

STRONGER QUESTION:

Do you believe that public health workers' salaries are a little lower than they should be, a little higher than they should be, or about right?

- Public health worker salaries are a little lower than they should be
- Public health worker salaries are a little higher than they should be
- Public health worker salaries are about right
- Don't know/No opinion

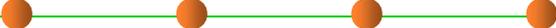


Question Wording (Cont.)

-
-
-
-
- Be neutral
 - Avoid loaded language
 - Avoid leading questions
- Be Aware of Sensitive Topics
 - Income
 - Age
 - Race/ethnicity
 - Home address
- Be aware of perceived social desirability of responses
 - Acceptability of behavior, attitudes, values



Form of Response



Closed-Ended

- Respondents choose answer from a predetermined set of choices
- Quantitative data
- Population surveys, polls
- Guaranteed comparability of responses
- Pre-coded responses are easier to analyze and summarize
- Information may be superficial in nature or miss key points

Open-Ended

- Respondents answer questions in their own words
- Qualitative data
- Focus groups, key informant interviews
- Allows for distinctions that are not possible with pre-coded formats
- Information is subject to interviewer and coder variance
- Information may be difficult to analyze and summarize in a concise manner

CHDB EXAMPLE: Open-ended Question with Coding by Interviewer

IF Q. 230 IS > 0, SKIP TO Q. 232.

231. What is the primary reason these children (this child) age 5 and younger are (is) NOT in childcare?

DO NOT READ LIST

Cost	01	PRB05CC
No subsidized childcare available	02	
Location	03	
Quality of childcare	04	
No program that fits schedule	05	
Child has special needs	06	
Transportation	07	
Won't take infants/child is too young	08	
Parent stays at home	09	
In school / afterschool program	10	
Other (Specify)	97	
Don't Know	98	
Refused	99	



Closed-Ended Responses

- 
- Response categories
 - 4-5 categories maximum
 - Numerical rating scales
 - Use when there are more than five categories
 - Rankings
 - Items should not exceed 10
 - Multiple choice
 - Are all alternatives covered?
 - Do choices overlap?
 - Are the meanings of the categories clear?

CHDB EXAMPLE: Closed-ended Question with Coding by Interviewer

Now, I'd like to talk to you about your social supports and your involvement in social activities.

90. About how often do you (does he/she) talk with friends or relatives on the telephone...

Several times a day	1	TALKFREL
Once a day	2	
A few times a week	3	
Once a week	4	
Less than once a week	5	
Never	6	
[DON'T READ] Don't Know	8	
[DON'T READ] Refused	9	



Question Order

- 
- Is the answer likely to be influenced by previous questions?
 - Is there a logical order for the questions such as the time frame?
 - Questions should be grouped by topic if multiple topics
 - First questions should arouse interest
 - Sensitive questions are often best at the end



Questionnaire Layout or Format

- 
- Will differ for self-administered and interview surveys
 - Any self-administered survey must be entirely self explanatory
 - Make sure it is clear where the answers should go—boxes or blank line
 - Make it clear who should answer the question—mark skips
 - Leave enough blank space for clarity and comments



Activity (Groups of 2 or 3)

- 
- Question Order
 - Question Wording



Pilot Testing

- 
- Feedback from a pilot test can tell you if questions
 - Are clear and make sense to others
 - Provide the information you need
 - Are at appropriate reading and language levels
 - Need skips or different ordering

 - Obtain feedback from...
 - Co-workers
 - Persons with expertise in survey research
 - Program staff, if appropriate
 - Potential respondents

 - Revise based on pilot feedback
 - Assess refusals and other potential problems
 - Time the survey to determine about how long it will take



Anticipating Later Analysis

- 
- Make sure you are collecting and recording all the information you need
 - Date and place of data collection
 - Interviewer name
 - ID number or names to link surveys
 - Time the length of interview

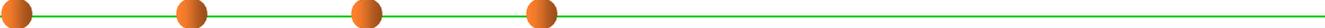


Introducing the Survey

- 
- Mail surveys need a cover letter
 - All surveys/interviews need an introduction
 - In-person and self-administered surveys need a consent form
 - Cover letter and consent include
 - Purpose/importance
 - Assurances of confidentiality and/or anonymity
 - Benefits and retaliation
 - Benefits and risks to respondent
 - Assurances that participation is voluntary
 - Special information for self-administered surveys
 - What to do with completed surveys
 - Who to call with questions



Quality Control

- 
- For self-administered questionnaires, review responses to see if questions are understood and answered properly.
 - For interviews, review answer forms and taped interviews to make sure that the questions are being asked as written and that answers are complete and consistent.



Contacting Us About Household Health Survey Data



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