Number of Mail and Phone Contact Attempts to Complete Physician Surveys

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Presentation Outline

1. Overview of the literature
2. Background and methods of the two surveys
3. Mode and number of contact attempts to get a complete physician survey
# Physician Response Rates to Mail Surveys

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Article</th>
<th>Incentive</th>
<th>AAPOR Response Rate 1</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keating, et al (2008)</td>
<td>$20 check $50 check</td>
<td>52% 68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dykema, et al (2011)</td>
<td>None $2 + promised $50 check $2 + promised $100 check</td>
<td>6% 15% 25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>James, et al (2011)</td>
<td>$25 cash $25 check</td>
<td>34% 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicholls, et al (2011)</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>23%</td>
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Physician Reluctance to Respond to Surveys

• Seymour Sudman (1985) identified reasons why physicians may not participate in surveys:
  1. Time
  2. Value
  3. Confidentiality concerns
  4. Questionnaire design
Study Background

• The National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) is part of the CDC and provides US public health statistics.

• NCHS and SRA conduct the two surveys discussed today, which are sponsored by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC).

• The National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS) Electronic Health Records Supplement (EHRS) provides information about the adoption and use of electronic health records.
Electronic Health Records Supplement (EHRS)

• Purpose: Collect information about the adoption of electronic health records (EHRs) in ambulatory care facilities

• EHRS began in 2008 as a national mail survey to 2000 physicians.

• It expanded to 10,302 physicians in each of the years 2010, 2011 and 2012.

• The sample is selected from AMA and AOA and is stratified by physician specialty and state.

• Eligibility is determined during the survey and is based on caring for ambulatory patients in non-hospital settings.

• We conducted a pen incentive experiment in 2012.
Physician Workflow Study (PWS)

- Purpose: Obtain physician attitudinal panel data regarding effects of and barriers to adopting EHRs on physician workflow over 3 years

- All 5,291 respondents to the 2011 EHRS were impaneled in the PWS from 2011 to 2013.

- Eligibility is determined during the survey and is based on caring for ambulatory patients in non-hospital settings.

- We conducted a pen experiment in 2012 and 2013.
Methods

• Surveys
  – Some questions span both to allow for comparison.
  – EHRS was 4 pages.
  – PWS was 4 pages in 2011 & 8 pages in 2012.

• Use a modified Dillman method

• Telephone interviews
  – First priority: survey completion
  – Second priority: eligibility determination
  – Third priority: close-out the case

• Respondents were physicians, office managers and other office staff
Overall Response Rates

- EHRS 2010 (N=10,302): 45%
- EHRS 2011 (N=10,302): 43%
- EHRS 2012 (N=10,302): 44%
- PWS 2011 (N=5,291): 59%
- PWS 2012 (N=5266): 48%
Final Dispositions for All Surveys
Final Dispositions by Who Responded

- Complete: 47% (Physician)
- Partial: 1% (Other)
- Hard Refusal: 7% (Physician, Office Staff, Other)
- Ineligible: 5% (Physician)
Final Dispositions by Physicians Only

- Complete: 84%
- Partial: 4%
- Hard Refusal: 2%
- Ineligible: 10%
Physician-Completed Survey Distribution by Contact Number
Physician-Completed Surveys by Mode

- Mail without Phone Prompt: 93%
- Mail following Phone Prompt: 3%
- Phone Only: 4%

(Chart showing survey completion rates by mode.)
Physician-Completed Surveys by Physician Specialty

[Bar chart showing percentage completion rates by specialty, with Emergency Med at 11%, Cardiology at 26%, Gastroenterology at 27%, Surgery at 28%, Neurology at 29%, Internal Med at 30%, Urology at 31%, Other at 33%, Psychiatry at 33%, ObGyn at 34%, Otolaryngology at 34%, Ophthalmology at 36%, Dermatology at 39%, and Pediatrics at 39%]
Physician-Completed Surveys: Specialty by Mean Contact Number
Physician-Completed Surveys by EHR Use

- Use EHR: 63%
- Do Not Use EHR: 37%
Physician-Completed Surveys: EHR Use by Mean Contact Number
Physician-Completed Surveys by Office Setting
Physician-Completed Surveys: Office Setting by Mean Contact Number

- Family planning clinic: 1.50
- Mental health center: 1.61
- Non-federal government clinic: 1.54
- HMO or other prepaid practice: 1.51
- Community health center: 1.59
- Freestanding clinic/urgicare: 1.59
- Faculty practice plan: 1.56
- Private practice: 1.53
Physician-Completed Survey by Number of Office Visits (EHRS Only)
Physician-Completed Surveys: Number of Office Visits by Mean Contact Number (EHRS Only)

![Bar chart showing the number of office visits per week and the corresponding mean contact number for different ranges of visits. The chart includes the following data points: 1.57 for 0-25 visits, 1.55 for 26-50 visits, 1.53 for 51-75 visits, 1.51 for 76-100 visits, and 1.50 for 101 or more visits.]}
Conclusions

- Response rates for all surveys were 43% or higher.

- The first year of impanelment (PWS 2011) brought the highest overall response rate (59%).

- Physicians provided the majority of complete responses.

- Office staff provided the majority of hard refusals.
Conclusions

• The majority of complete physician responses came within the first three contacts (mailings).

• It took about 1.6 contact attempts to get a complete physician response.

• 93% of those complete physician responses were mailed survey responses without a phone prompt.

• Therefore, while calling physicians to ask them to complete a survey by phone or prompt them to complete a mail survey provides a boost in responses, the effect appears to be relatively small.
Thank you!

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REFERENCES