
Introduction of a new series: Hints & Kinks in survey research

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We start in this issue a new series entitled Hints & Kinks in survey research (H&K) that will be edited by Bruna Galobardes (supported by our associated editors: Thomas Kohlmann, David V. McQueen, Herman Van Oyen). H&K is a two-page essay series providing tips on survey research. It covers all aspects involved in a survey, organised in three main areas: survey and questionnaire design, implementation, and statistical analysis.

H&K covers topics relevant to all steps involved in survey research and surveillance, from the conception of the study to presenting the results, and all steps in-between. It will present experiences with techniques that work and techniques that didn't work, in a variety of areas and topics, such as writing questions, questionnaire design, survey implementation, or new and original ways to show results, etc. The essays are based on published work and on valuable and profound personal experience. They should be illustrated with real examples of questionnaires, questions, or survey practices.

Why this new series? We all know how important the first steps are in planning a survey or how important it is to validate instruments or to appropriately adapt existing ones to a specific population or setting. However, we also know how difficult to find funding to develop and validate a questionnaire is and, how difficult it is to publish research to evaluate, for example, the effect of a different wording in a question, or the effect of different methods to administer a questionnaire. One reason is that some of the aspects tested are very specific to the place where the survey is conducted or to the topic being studied, findings therefore being difficult to generalise and ultimately, rarely considered high priority in a public health journal. Yet, we still think these experiences are important and helpful for others in the field

of risk factor surveillance and health survey research. H&K will therefore report this knowledge currently only known by or within specific survey teams. Today, SPM calls out to the public health community to share their experiences from practical survey and surveillance work with others and submit manuscripts on those topics. If what you have tested and learned is indeed very local or specific, add a short review of the literature on the topic, cite reference books that have reviewed the topic, and this H&K can then be very helpful to somebody faced with the same or similar problem.

H&K is addressed to anybody who works in survey research, whether planning, overseeing, or directly working in any of the steps involved in survey research and surveillance. We do have an international scope, therefore our preference is to publish the essays in English. However, the editorial office can offer translation assistance from other languages to English.

To secure a sound scientific basis for the H&K, we will follow a peer review process. Each essay will be evaluated by the editor of the series who may already provide a first feedback to author(s). Each submission is then sent to a selected associated editor of the journal and to at least one external reviewer. All reviews are sent to author(s) who can then respond to the comments. This process helps to ensure a good quality of the series while maintaining its fresh and dynamic format.

The first H&K of the series presents Key steps in survey research which gives an overview of the main steps involved in survey planning. It presents the style we would like to suggest for the H&Ks and it gives you a taste of what is coming up in future issues. Enjoy!

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