

# When a "no" is a "NO!"

How to collect data to minimize participant refusals

Jaime Dohack, Natasha Sadoff, Jessica Sanford, Robin Burnette, Robyn Sagatov, and Nicole Weinstein on behalf of the HCS Study Team

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# Outline

- Study Background
- Minimizing participant refusals: families
- Minimizing participant refusals: community key informants
- Conclusions



Healthy  
Communities  
Study

How Communities  
Shape Children's Health

# HCS Study Background

- National observation study assessing the associations between characteristics of community programs and policies and BMI, nutrition and physical activity in children
  - 5000 children across 130 communities
  - Quantitative and qualitative information
  - Complex study design



# HCS Data Collection

- Main Data Collection Components
  - Home visits with families
    - Recruit families and conduct data collection visit in their home (1 visit for standard protocol or 2 visits for enhanced protocol)
  - Interviews with community Key Informants
    - Recruit Key Informants with knowledge of community programs and policies related to nutrition and physical activity to complete a telephone or in-person interview
  - In-person school observations
- Visits to Date
  - Approximately 4,200 household visits have been completed
  - Approximately 1,100 key informant interviews have been completed

# MINIMIZING PARTICIPANT REFUSALS:

ADULT AND CHILD PARTICIPANTS/HOME VISIT

# Minimizing Family Participant Refusals

## Design of the Study

- Incentives based on proximity of stores
- Instruments that aid FDCs in obtaining responses
- Questions that aid in probing
- For enhanced households, offering additional incentives for the second visit
- FDCs hired from local community
- In-home visits
- Availability on evenings and weekends
- Ability to opt out of specific portions of the protocol



# Minimizing Participant Refusals

## Getting families to participate

- Study participant recruitment and enrollment through call centers
  - Establishing rapport
  - Following scripts for managing participant expectations
  - Offering interview options for participant comfort level
  - Allowing visits to be conducted in public locations if necessary
  - Allowing flexible rescheduling
  - Following refusal conversion techniques



# Minimizing Participant Refusals

## Field Data Collectors

- In-depth in-person training, field supervisor relationships, weekly group calls
- Multiple confirmation calls
- Refusal conversion scripts





# Minimizing Participant Refusals (con't)

## Field Data Collectors

- Local scheduling attempts
- Local recruitment
  - Phone calls
  - Letter campaign
  - Door to door

# MINIMIZING PARTICIPANT REFUSALS:

KEY INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

# Community Key Informant Interviews

- 10-14 interviews per Community
- Interview length: 1 ¼-1 ½ Hours
- Representing 4 Sectors:
  - School
  - Health Organizations or Coalitions
  - Government
  - Non Profit/Community Organization
- Conducted by Community Liaisons in person and by phone
- Recruited by Community Liaison and Scheduler staff

# Minimizing Key Informant (KI) Refusals

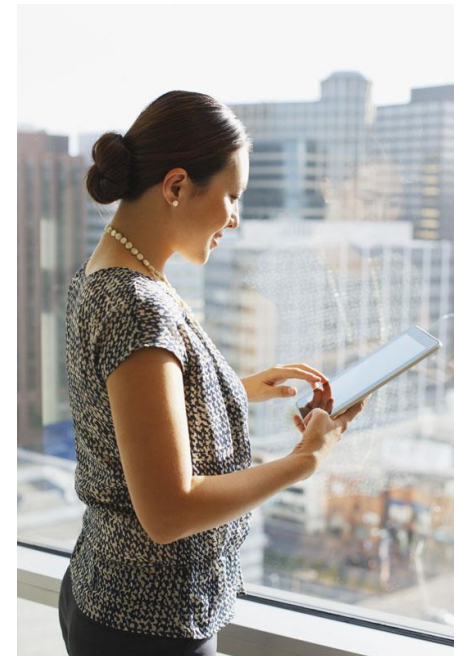
## Building Quick Rapport

- Requires Community Liaison/scheduler to be familiar with the organization
- Ability to go “off script”
- Comfort in answering questions

# Minimizing Key Informant Refusals

## Respecting Key Informant Time

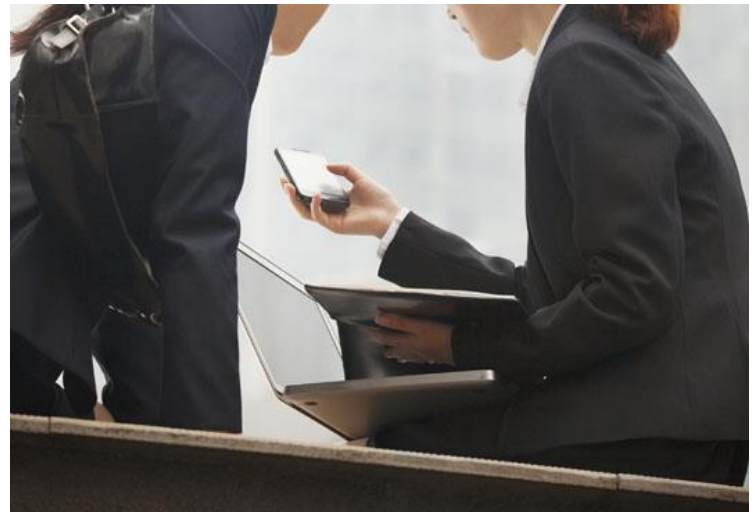
- Scheduling around the Key Informant's schedule
- Flexibility in methods
- Flexibility around interview length



# Minimizing Key Informant Refusals

## Snowball Sampling

- Asking Key Informant for referrals
- Asking Key Informant for permission to use their name



# Minimizing Key Informant Refusals

## Incentives

- Recognizing that monetary incentive was not motivating
- Appeal to sense of community
- Allowing them to talk about their programming



# Minimizing Key Informant Refusals

## Passive Refusal

- Meeting avoidance
- Persistence in calling
- Relying on phone more than email





# Conclusions

## Lessons Learned for Future Studies

- Flexibility is critical
- Persistence
- Local considerations matter
- Personal touches keep data collectors engaged



### Healthy Communities Study Field Data Collector Newsletter

Issue 8, April 2015

#### Did You Know?

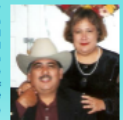
##### Medical Record Release Forms

Did you know that the data we abstract from the medical records is extremely important for us to be able to answer our research questions for the Healthy Communities Study? We get a history of height and weight measurements from the medical records and this helps us see how children have grown over time. We can then compare how children have grown across communities and look at the programs and policies that existed during that timeframe in their communities to see which of those are associated with healthy growth.

If a family is hesitant to fill out the medical record release form, your first step should be to explain the importance of the medical record data and remind the family that we keep all the data we collect private. Then you can try to find out why the family is uncomfortable filling out the form. If they are only uncomfortable providing certain information, for example, their child's social security number, you can fill out the rest of the form and leave that part blank. But make sure the family signs the form, and provides contact information for at least one medical provider.

#### MEET YOUR COWORKERS

Ethier Guzman is currently working as a FDC in San Antonio, TX. She began field data collection in 1980 and has been collecting data from coast to coast ever since. She considers this type of work very fulfilling and likes that no two days are ever the same.



Ethier started with Battelle in January of 2015 and is enjoying being able to work with so many families in the San Antonio area. She takes personal satisfaction in being a data collector because she gets the opportunity to meet different families of various backgrounds.

On her time off, she enjoys gardening, reading mystery novels and spending time with her husband.



#### CONGRATULATIONS TO:

The entire FDC Team for completing 564 home visits during the month of March!!

The following FDCs for completing milestone visits:  
3900<sup>h</sup> Visit – Silvana Orner  
3800<sup>h</sup> Visit – Hira Malik

The following FDCs for top completes last month:  
24 Visits – Estlier Guzman  
23 Visits – Linda Wunderley  
21 Visits – Marilyn Verde  
20 Visits – Yesenia Rodriguez

Awesome job FDC Team!!!

#### What's Going on Out In the Community?

##### School Gardens

On-site gardening has been popping up in many schools around the country, offering opportunities for fun and physical activity while teaching how healthy food is produced. School gardening engages students by letting them become part of the learning process.

In a number of schools, students have the opportunity to go to "outdoor classrooms" and learn about the principles of gardening, agricultural science, and nutrition. Some programs even take it a step further and incorporate tips on healthy food preparation and meal ideas. School gardens offer a collaborative setting where students, teachers, and parents can all be involved.

According to the National Gardening Association, research shows there are several benefits of school garden programs. A few are listed here:

- Increase interest in eating fruits and vegetables and improve attitude toward fruits and vegetables.
- Significantly increase science achievement scores.
- Improve social skills and behavior.
- Improve environmental attitudes, especially in younger students.

To read more benefits of school gardening, go to:

<http://www.1000schools.com/article.aspx?id=1000schools-benefits-school-gardens>



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800.201.2011 | [solutions@battelle.org](mailto:solutions@battelle.org) | [www.battelle.org](http://www.battelle.org)