The use of an Internet panel to monitor sexual and reproductive health in the general population

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Layout of the presentation

- Theoretical and practical knowledges of phone and Internet surveys
- Context
- Study’s goals
- Description of FECOND surveys
- Results
- Perspectives
The telephone theoretical advantages / practical drawbacks

**Telephone has good theoretical properties:**

- No coverage bias (in France: 99%)
- Possibility of random selection

**In practice, these properties are questionable:**

- No coverage bias but selection bias (social / health)
- No information on not-contacted / non-respondents
The internet: theoretical drawbacks/ practical advantages

Internet suffers from:

→ Low coverage rate (75%), equipment inequalities (low SES)
→ No sampling frame / no random selection

→ Solution: Use of Access panels

But access panels offer:

→ information on their members
→ Less expensive and faster data collection
In parallel, three phenomena:

- General response decrease
- Increasing data collection costs / duration
- Increasing internet access
The access panels, a potential alternative

→ Already used for commercial or opinion surveys ...

... but, French public researchers remains skeptical because of their theoretical drawbacks.

→ Telephone has good theoretical properties but suffers from practical difficulties.

→ Despite access panels theoretical drawbacks, still important to compare the phone and the Internet IN PRACTICE.
Survey’s objectives

To test (in practice) validity of online panels recruited by pollsters to conduct general population surveys:

Replication of a national survey on sexual and reproductive health made a year earlier by telephone on an access panel

Inserm-Ined FECOND survey: Fertility, contraception and sexual dysfunction
## Surveys presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Telephone</th>
<th>Internet</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age rank</strong></td>
<td>15-49</td>
<td>16-49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sampling method</strong></td>
<td>Random digital dialing (landline / mobile phones)</td>
<td>Stratified sampling in IPSOS panel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of fieldwork</strong></td>
<td>145 days</td>
<td>34 days</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Duration of questionnaire</strong></td>
<td>41 minutes</td>
<td>40 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample size</strong></td>
<td>8645</td>
<td>8992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Efforts to improve response rate / quality</strong></td>
<td>→ Call-backs to refusals → High number of call attempts</td>
<td>→ No other survey request during the 2 first weeks → Three reminder e-mails</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Response rate</strong></td>
<td>44,8 %</td>
<td>20,0 %</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assessment of samples’ quality

→ Respondents’ sociodemographic profiles

→ Prevalences of sexual and reproductive behaviours
Assessment of samples’ quality

→ Respondents’ sociodemographic profiles

→ Prevalences of sexual and reproductive behaviours
Comparison of respondents’ profiles

→ To identify bias and determine which sample is the most representative of the target population

Which sociodemographics?

→ Gender  → Birthplace
→ Age  → Living situation
→ Educational level  → Place of residence
→ Employment status  → Household size
Common over- or under-representation samples

- Difference between Telephone/Census
- Difference between Internet/Census

[Bar chart showing differences between Telephone/Census and Internet/Census for various categories such as gender, age groups, education levels, occupation, and living situations.]
Differences between both samples (percentage points)

- Difference between telephone/Census
- Difference between Internet/Census

[Bar chart showing the differences between telephone/Census and Internet/Census]
For all sociodemographics except household size, telephone sample is closer to target population than internet sample.
Assessment of samples’ quality

→ Respondents’ sociodemographic profiles

→ Prevalences of sexual and reproductive behaviours
Assessment of samples’ quality

→ Respondents’ sociodemographic profiles

→ Prevalences of sexual and reproductive behaviours
Comparison of the prevalences of some sexual and reproductive behaviours

→ To identify behaviours differences between both samples

Which sexual and reproductive behaviours?

→ Heterosexual and homosexual intercourse – lifetime
→ Five or more sexuel partners of the same sex / the opposite sex
→ Sexual intercourse over the last 12 months
→ Last sexual intercourse with regular partner
→ One partner for pregnancies
→ Forcing sexual relations over the last 12 months
→ Abortion
Prevalences of some sexual behaviours in both samples

Common behaviours

Prevalences are close between both samples for men and women.
Prevalences of some sexual behaviours in both samples

**Stigmatized behaviours**

Behaviours more declared on the Internet than by phone for men and women.
Gendered standards behaviours

Behaviours that are more or less stigmatized according to respondent’s gender

Prevalences of some sexual behaviours in both samples

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Conclusion

✓ Behind « Internet survey », two dimensions :
  → Data collection mode
  → Sampling sphere

✓ FECOND online : both dimensions

Results

✓ It is possible to conduct a long, complex and sensitive survey on a sample of panelists and to impose our rules to the pollster

✓ Internet respondents less close to target population than telephone respondents

✓ Common behaviours are close on two samples. More differences for behaviours subject to social desirability
Conclusion

✓ We are in favor of using panels:

✓ to monitor health indicators (trends’ study)
✓ In an exploratory goal before surveys

✓ For prevalences, we have good arguments to think that real levels are closer to Internet than telephone’s levels (but collection mode and volunteers population effects)

✓ We’ll test the collection mode effect with the next FECOND survey
Thank you for your attention!
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