PARTICIPATION RATE FOR YOUNGER AGE GROUPS BENEFIT MOST OF SMS Reminders – The FINHEALTH 2017 Survey

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BACKGROUND – TRENDS IN PARTICIPATION RATES IN FINLAND

![Graph showing trends in participation rates for men and women in Finland from 1982 to 2017.](image-url)
METHODS

- Data from the FinHealth 2017 survey
  - Sampling frame: National population register
  - Nationally representative sample size: 11,965
  - Age group: 18+ men and women
  - Multi-staged stratified sample

- Data collection methods
  - Self-administered questionnaires
  - Physical examination
  - Collection of biological samples
METHODS – RECRUITMENT PROCESS

Invitation letter with assigned time for health examination. Request to confirm given appointment either on the internet or by phone.

Did not confirm participation

Confirmed participation

Participated to health exam

Did not participate to health exam

Request to fill-in questionnaire/phone interview

Re-contact by phone call/SMS, and/or postcard
RESULTS

- 58% participated to the health examination
  - 43% of participants (28% of the entire eligible sample) confirmed their pre-assigned appointment or changed it without reminder
- 8% returned only the mailed survey questionnaire or participated to a short telephone interview
- 34% did not participate at all
RESULTS – PARTICIPATION STATUS

- Proactively participated in health examination
- Participated in health examination after re-contact
- Returned only the questionnaire
- Did not participate
RESULTS – RE-CONTACTS

- Mobile phone numbers were available for about 60% of eligible sample
- 97% of those who did not confirm or change their pre-assigned appointment time were re-contacted:
  - 57% by phone call or SMS
  - 27% by postcard
  - 16% with both phone call/SMS and a postcard
- 42% of re-contacted persons participated to the health examination
RESULTS – EFFECTIVE REMINDERS

- Reminders were most effective among those who are usually difficult to recruit.

- Participation rates to the health examinations increase with reminder
  - In men from 24% to 54%, and in women from 34% to 62%
  - Among 18-25 years old from 9% to 37%, and 25-34 years old from 18% to 47%
  - Persons speaking some other language than Finnish or Swedish as their mother tongue from 19% to 56%
CONCLUSIONS

- Additional contacts to remind and motivate participation seem to be beneficial for increasing of participation rate
- Targeted recruitment strategies for different population groups would be needed
- Resources (time and money) required for reminders and personal re-contacts need to be included already when planning the survey
THANK YOU!

More information about FinHealth survey at [www.thl.fi/finhealth](http://www.thl.fi/finhealth)

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