The Utility of Conducting Interviews in Multiple Languages on the World Trade Center Health Registry

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Presentation Outline

- Outline goal and purpose of the World Trade Center Health Registry (WTCHR)
- Discuss the cultural diversity of the eligible population
- Review our protocol for conducting the WTCHR interviews in multiple languages
- Examine questionnaire timing data by languages
- Evaluate the utility of conducting interview in multiple languages
The Goal of the WTC Health Registry

- The World Trade Center Health Registry is designed to assess the health effects of the World Trade Center (WTC) disaster of September 11, 2001.

- The Registry will follow participants to evaluate short and long term physical and mental health effects including those resulting from exposures to the dust, fumes, airborne particulates on 9/11 and in the following weeks as the fires burned.
What is the WTC Health Registry?

- A registry of the people most exposed to the smoke, dust, debris, and airborne substances created by the World Trade Center (WTC) disaster.

- The eligibility criteria is based on those most heavily exposed within a specific geographic area of Manhattan. Eligible persons include:
  - People south of Chambers Street on 9/11/01
  - Residents south of Canal Street
  - School children and staff enrolled in schools south of Canal Street
  - Workers and volunteers in the rescue, recovery, and cleanup operations at the WTC site or on Staten Island Recovery Operations between September 11, 2001 and June 30, 2002.
Map of WTC Area and Staten Island

Geographical Boundaries and Eligibility Criteria
Cultural Diversity of Registrants

- 2000 US Census data shows 36% of city population is comprised of people born outside the U.S.

- Most commonly spoken languages in lower Manhattan include:
  - English, Spanish, Mandarin, and Cantonese

- Other commonly spoken languages in lower Manhattan include:
  - Russian, Polish, Italian, Portuguese, and French
Overview of the Language Protocol

- The main steps of our Language Protocol encompass the following:
  - Identifying Interview Languages
  - Use of Translation Services
  - Interviewer Training Protocol
Web Interview Languages

- Our interview was developed in English, then translated into:
  - Mandarin
  - Cantonese
  - Spanish

- RTI has bilingual interviewers who can conduct the interview in each of these languages. We have trained the following number of bilingual interviewers to date:
  - 14 Spanish Interviewers
  - 11 Mandarin and Cantonese Interviewers
Web-interview Language Screen

WTC Health Registry

**LANG1**: IN WHAT LANGUAGE SHOULD THE INTERVIEW BE CONDUCTED?

NOTE: WHEN USING LANGUAGE LINE SERVICES, PLEASE SELECT OTHER (LANGUAGE LINE) OPTION AND NOT ENGLISH.

- English
- Spanish
- Cantonese
- Mandarin
- Other (Language Line)

- DON'T KNOW
- REFUSE

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What is Language Line?

- Language Line is a national translation service that has interpreters available to assist clients with translation needs.
  - They offer interpreters for 148 languages.
  - They assist interviewers with identifying the language spoken by the potential registrant (if such a determination cannot be made by an interviewer before hand) and assists with conducting all aspects of the interview.
Interviewer Training on Language Protocol

Interviewers complete in-depth 3-hour language training which includes the following steps:

- Listening to audio files of different languages to assist in identifying the language of the sample member. This part of training focused on identifying differences in:
  - Cadence
  - Intonation
  - Common Greetings in Other Languages

- Practicing transfers of Spanish, Cantonese, or Mandarin speaking sample members to an audio file that is recorded in the sample member’s language explaining an interviewer who speaks their language will call them back

- Reviewing protocol for transferring to the translation service

- Watching videos with mock scenario of an interview conducted through the translation service
CISCO Agent Desktop
# Interview Timing Data by Language

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th># of Completed Registrant Interviews</th>
<th>Average Length of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>34,337</td>
<td>29 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>46 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cantonese</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>40 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mandarin</td>
<td>231</td>
<td>40 min</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other – Translation Services</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>80 min</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Telephone Interviews completed through 5/14/04
Interviews Conducted in Other Languages using Translation Services

- Polish: 19%
- Portuguese: 15%
- Russian: 16%
- Italian: 16%
- Japanese: 10%
- French: 6%
- Other: 6%
Interview Costs Associated with Translation Services

- Factors affecting interviewing costs for language cases:
  - Additional interviewer labor
  - Additional toll charges (phone charges) for the translation service
  - Translation services costs
  - Additional training time on Language Protocol

- Interview Costs for the Translation Service:
  - Translation services increased the average cost per case by a factor of 3.
  - This included time spent screening out ineligibles and completing interviews.
Utility of Conducting Interviews in Multiple Languages

- Prior to the start of the study, we had to review the utility of conducting interviews in multiple languages.

- Based on our review of Census data on language usage in lower Manhattan, the data suggested that
  - 73% of the population spoke English, 20% spoke Chinese, 1% spoke Spanish, and 6% spoke another language.

- To reduce the risk of biasing estimates, we developed an extensive language protocol to include non-English speaking cultural groups in the Registry.
Conclusion

- Costs
  - Labor, training time, and translation service fees

- Benefit
  - Providing data on respondents who would not otherwise be interviewed and who may be different in some important way from English speaking respondents

- Does the additional analytical utility of pursuing these cases warrant the additional costs?
More Information

WTC Health Registry website:

www.wtcregistry.org

To view presentation

http://www.rti.org/ifdtc

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