

2018 Federal Committee on Statistical Methodology

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# Improving the Measurement of Sexual Victimization among Children through a Redesign of the National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence

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# Outline

- The need to consider redesign of survey
  - Previous data collection mode was by telephone
  - Issues related to asking vulnerable populations (youth) sensitive information
- Core questionnaire design issues
- Challenges of collecting data
  - Modes
  - Incentives
  - Testing

## Background on NatSCEV

- National Survey of Children's Exposure to Violence (NatSCEV)
- Administered in 2008, 2011, 2014
- First comprehensive attempt to measure children's exposure to violence in their daily lives.
  - Across settings (home, school, community)
  - National estimates of direct victimization and indirect exposure to violence
- Data from prior NatSCEVs greatly contributed to an understanding of childhood victimization and informed policy development.

# Population of Interest

- Children under the age of 18 in the U.S.
- Two major developmental groups in past iterations:
  - Children ages 0 to 9 whose parents/guardians reported for them.
  - Children ages 10 to 17 who responded for themselves after parental consent.

## Previous Modes of Data Collection

- 2008 and 2011 surveys used random digit dial telephone methods to sample households and sample persons within household.
- Declining response rates led to a multiple frame approach - all telephone - in 2014.
- Despite these efforts, response rates to the telephone data collection were lower than desired and showed a consistent decline in response over time.

## Need for Redesign - Content

- The main component of the survey is the Juvenile Victimization Questionnaire (JVQ).
- JVQ was designed to collect data on a broad spectrum of violence exposure in 5 domains:
  - Conventional Crime
  - Child Maltreatment
  - Peer and sibling victimization
  - Sexual assault
  - Witnessing and indirect victimization
- JVQ includes screening questions and follow-ups on incidents.

## Need for Redesign - Content (Cont'd)

- The JVQ is comprehensive but lengthy. It is important to balance its ability to be comprehensive while also minimizing respondent burden.
- Reassessment of the content
  - Some screener items have low endorsement rates and/or poor construct validity.
- Some content will be eliminated.
- Other content will be simplified.
- Need to consider data collection with self-administration in mind.

## Redesign - Content Review Process

- Extensive literature review of domestic and international surveys on children's exposure to violence, crime and trauma.
- Concept mapping of the JVQ questions to key indicators.
- External review by a panel of subject matter experts.
  - Conference calls to discuss topical modules (i.e. sexual violence).
  - In-person/WebEx meeting to discuss the overall content.

## Need for Redesign - Mode

- Telephone response rates have plummeted over time.
- Collecting NatSCEV data through in-person interviews is not ideal.
  - Face-to-face interviews are expensive and cost prohibitive for large studies.
  - Research shows they depress responses to sensitive items.
- Need to consider self-administration.
  - Web
  - Mail

## Need for Redesign - Mode (Cont'd)

- An alternative is an address-based sample (ABS) in which households are pushed to the Web to respond.
- Multiple-phase design
  - Household screener (push to web, followed by mail)
  - Parent main interview
  - Youth main interview (for older youth)
- Concerns with this approach include:
  - Ability of young children, as young as 10, to comprehend written text.
  - Obtaining parental consent for youth to complete a survey on sensitive content.
  - Contacting and encouraging consented youth to respond.

# Surveying Young Adolescents

- Parents reported for children ages 0 to 9 in previous administrations.
- Analysis of some key outcomes showed that the prevalence of incidents and exposures reported by parent respondents of 9-year-olds were similar to the incidents self-reported by 10 and 11-year olds.
- Proposed revision of age boundaries in next survey:
  - Parents will report for children ages 2 to 11.
  - Self-reporting only among youth ages 12 and older.
  - This helps to reduce concerns about younger adolescents' ability to comprehend self-administered questions.

## Surveying Young Adolescents (Cont'd)

- Studies have shown that parents of older adolescents are less aware of their victimizations and exposure.
- However, the relationship between the youth's age and the parents' knowledge of what occurs in all areas of the adolescent's life is unknown.
  - Certain types of victimizations may be less likely to be known by parents.
- We are considering a test of the relationship between the reporting of a parent and their 12-17 year old.
  - GfK Knowledge Panel to provide the respondents for this evaluation.
  - The parent will report for their youth (12-17 years old) and the youth will self-report. Then, we will compare the answers.

## Surveying Young Adolescents (Cont'd)

- Few existing surveys have explored using self-administered Web/mail modes to obtain responses from parents of younger children and to gain parental consent to allow older children to complete the survey.
- We are proposing to test methods that explore response patterns to both parent reporting and consent for adolescent participation.
- We are considering an ABS sample of 2,000 households, ideally with a concentration of households with persons under age 18.

# Methods to Increase Response

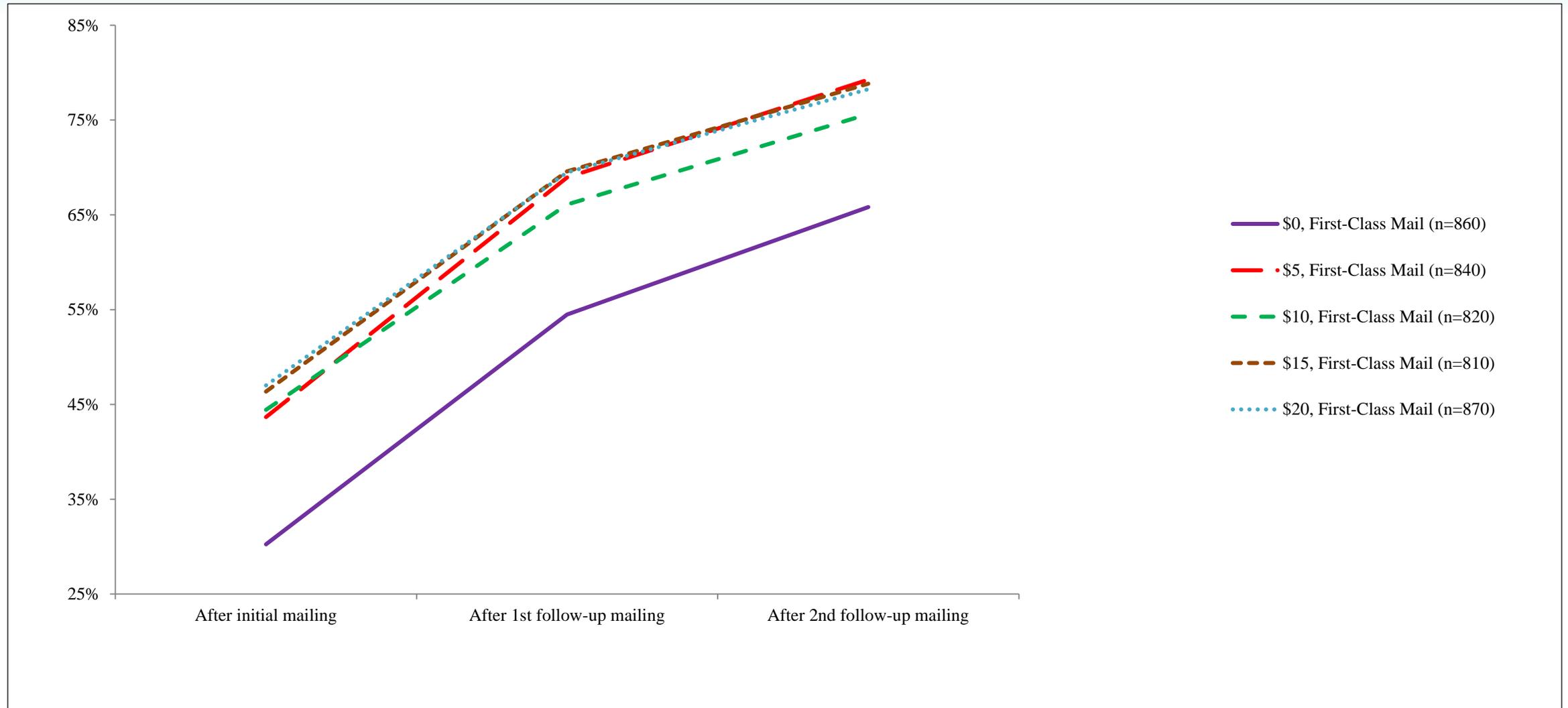
- Incentives have proven to be very effective methods to increase response rates in ABS surveys of households.
  - Meta-analysis by Mercer et al (2015) shows prepaid incentives in mail surveys increase response rates (over no incentive) on average by 10 percentage points for \$2 and 16 percentage points for \$5.
  - Research in the National Household Education Survey (NHES), a two-phase survey of children, showed these results hold for this age group.
  - However, the use of prepaid incentives is not widely encouraged in government surveys.

# NHES 2011 Screener Results (Han et al. 2013)

Table 1. Screener incentive treatment effects

	Screener incentive treatment	
	\$2 <i>n</i> = 18,130	\$5 <i>n</i> = 18,130
Screener phase		
Final response rate <sup>*</sup>	66.5%	70.9%
Initial response rate <sup>*</sup>	36.3%	42.8%
Topical phase		
Conditional response rate <sup>a</sup>	73.9%	71.9%

# NHES 2<sup>nd</sup> Phase Incentive Effects on Response Rates



## Methods to Increase Response (Cont'd)

- Recent experiments in the American National Election Survey (ANES) of 2016 found that, for a Web-only survey, escalating incentives (after initial prepaid incentive, offering post-paid incentives of higher amounts close to the end of data collection) could result in good response rates (over 40 percent) without using mail.
- We are considering a post-paid incentive, about \$20, for completion of the main survey instrument on Web.
- Follow-up via mail with households that do not complete the Web screener.
- Test Web response for youth 12 and older.

# Plans

- Multiple development and pre-test activities.
- Cognitive testing of revised questionnaire content.
- Design and implement the pilot test to evaluate an ABS with Web push methodology and the use of postpaid incentives.
- Design and implement a test to evaluate the ability of parents to report for youth ages 12 to 17.
- Design and implement a test to compare ABS estimates and response rates to those from a Gfk panel.



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# Thanks

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