

Monitoring Follow-Up Rates

Monitoring interview follow-up rates on a regular basis is paramount in order to plan timelines and resources for achieving project targets. This Methodology Bits presents templates and suggestions that can help you choose what information to track and how to do it. They can be modified for your particular project needs.

The Basics

- It is helpful to use a consistent timeframe to track follow-up rates (e.g. weekly, monthly). It will help you understand follow-up patterns.
- It is important to monitor follow-up rates by group to make sure your groups are balanced. Typically you will monitor progress of the intervention and control groups. Subgroups should also be monitored if the project has preset quotas (e.g. different sites, participant demographics, different types of intervention).
- You can track overall follow-up percentages compared to both baseline and previous follow-up time points. This will help you understand overall follow-up patterns.
- For studies with an interview window (e.g. 2 weeks before/ 2 weeks after the interview due date), it is important to track not only interviews by completion date, but also interview/participant status by DUE month, otherwise you won't be able to monitor cases that are lost to follow-up.
- Make sure you communicate follow-up concerns to your team and/or supervisor as soon as possible so that you have time to plan an alternative recruitment strategy if needed.

12-MONTH FOLLOW-UP TRACKING	Completed by calendar month			Status by due month				
	Intervention	Control	Total	Due	NOT completed	Completed	Closed after 6-month	Missed window
Baseline	150	150	300	-	-	-	-	-
6-month	143	139	282	-	-	-	-	-
19-Jan	21	21	42	44	2	42	1	2
19-Feb	20	22	42	45	1	44	2	1
19-Mar	22	23	45	46	3	43	0	3
19-Apr	22	18	40	47	1	46	0	1
19-May	23	20	43	45	4	41	3	0
19-June (ongoing)	21	22	43	47	8	39	2	0
Total	129	126	255	274	19	255	8	7
% of baseline	86%	84%	85%	-	-	-	-	-
% of 6-month	90%	91%	90%	-	-	-	-	-

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Closed Status Tracking

Monitoring reasons for closing a case is another way to understand lost to follow-up patterns. Just like with completion numbers, it is important to monitor closed statuses by group.

Reason	#			#			% of target		
	I	C	T	I	C	T	I	C	T
Completed study	129	126	255	129	126	255	86%	84%	85%
To follow-up	10	9	19	10	9	19	7%	6%	6%
Closed - Unable to reach	5	6	11	11	15	26	7%	10%	9%
Closed - Refused	3	4	7						
Closed - Deceased	2	3	5						
Closed - Due to health condition	1	2	3						
Total	150	150	300	150	150	300	100%	100%	100%

I=Intervention, C=Control, T=Total

CONTACTS TRACKING – JUNE 2019	#	%
Call back - language barrier	8	1%
Call back requested	55	4%
Called and did not leave message	119	8%
Contacted service provider	97	7%
Could not leave message	104	7%
Could not receive incoming calls	75	5%
Email sent	122	9%
Fax sent	9	1%
Hung up	19	1%
Incorrect number	26	2%
Interview confirmed	25	2%
Interview refused	8	1%
Interview rescheduled	9	1%
Left message (family/household member)	132	9%
Left message (service provider)	115	8%
Left message (voicemail)	169	12%
Letter mailed	36	3%
Line busy	99	7%
Other-See notes	18	1%
Out of service	46	3%
Participant inquiry	76	5%
Scheduled interview	43	3%
TOTAL	1410	100%

Monitoring Follow-Up Effort

Monitoring follow-up effort is another way to stay on track and plan resources and timelines. One common way to do this is to track the number of contacts per month or per week.

The use of a recruitment database can help significantly with all tracking efforts.

MAP - Survey Research Unit

Providing high-quality and efficient research and evaluation services to the health and social sciences community.

www.sru.cuhs.ca
SRU@smh.ca

St. Michael's

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