

Measuring What We Spend: Toward a New Consumer Expenditure Survey

Incentives Discussion

Panel on Redesigning the BLS Consumer Expenditure Surveys
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Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education

Outline

- Short summary on incentives
- Three arbitrary examples to illustrate different incentive structure
- Three questions from BLS

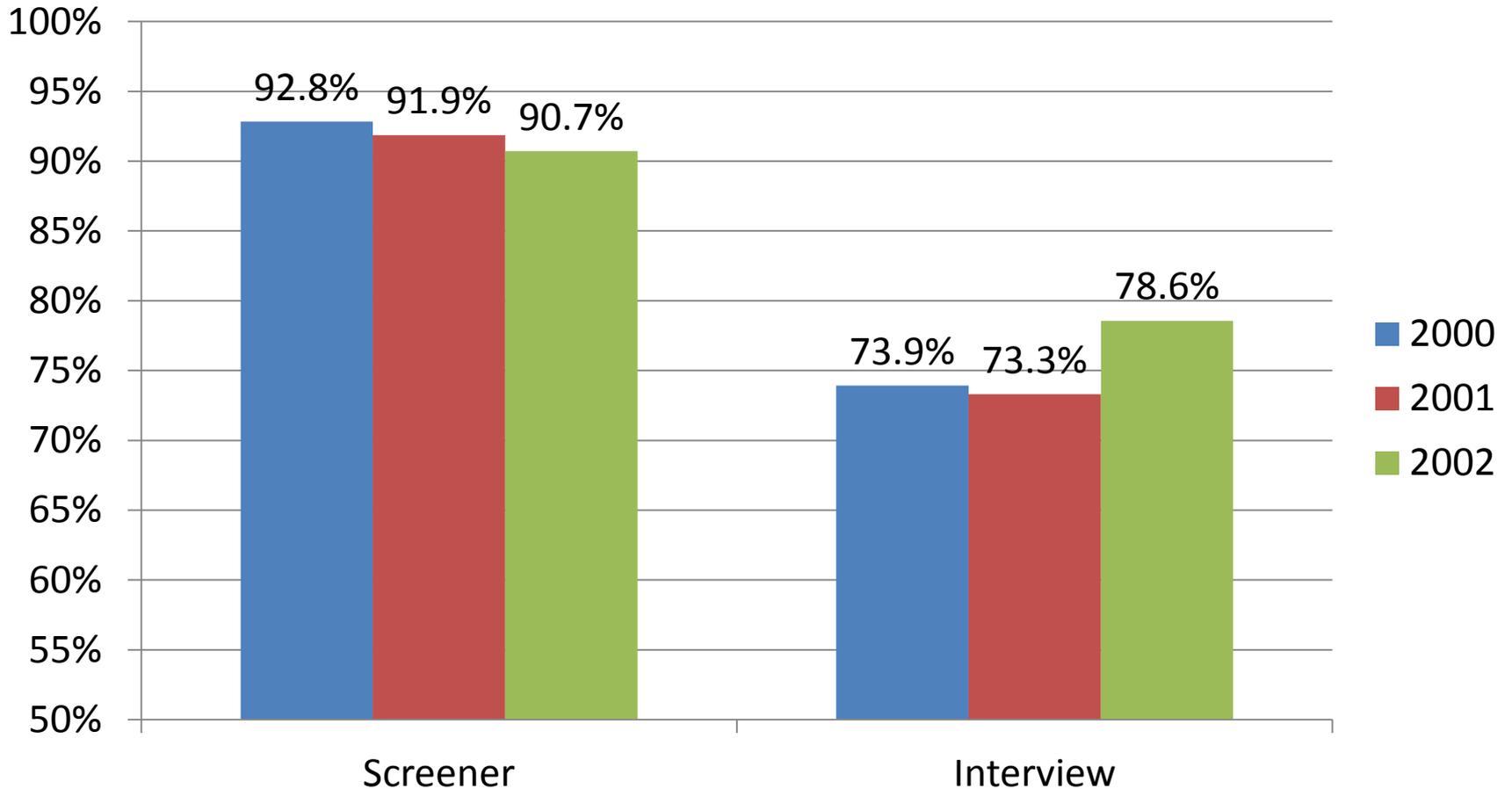
General Considerations for Incentives

- Cash
- Prepaid (not for diary completion)
- Most effective at the correct point in the survey process
- For surveys with longitudinal components, should be used throughout the process
- Differential incentives should be considered
- Larger (e.g., \$100+) amounts should be considered, especially when intrusive or sustained
- Investigate use of intrinsic incentives

Example 1: Single Incentive to All Sample Members

- The National Survey of Drug Use and Health introduced a \$30 promised incentive in 2002, for completing an interview with the selected adult
- Experimentally tested \$0, \$20, and \$40
 - Substantially higher response rates, highest in \$40
 - Lower cost per interview in both incentive conditions

NHSDA/NSDUH



Data source: Kennet et a., 2005

Example 2: Differential Incentives across Sample Members

- National Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Survey
- Phase 1: \$10 promised incentive
- Phase 2 (subsample of nonrespondents): \$40 incentive

Example 3: Differential Incentives across Survey Components and Sample Members

- National Survey of Family Growth, cycle 6
- Phase 1 and 2:
 - Screener incentive
 - Interview incentive
- Phase 3:
 - Screener incentive
 - Interview incentive

The CE Redesign Options

- Recruitment and interview
- Self administration of the journal with detailed expenditure data, over a sustained period of time
- Repeated journal administration

Panel Recommendation (6-7)

A critical element of any CE redesign should be the use of incentives. The incentive structure should be developed, and tested, based on careful consideration of the form, value, and frequency of incentives. Serious consideration should be given to the use of differential incentives based on different levels of burden and/or differential response propensities.

Questions

- 1. How dependent are the designs on the incentives?
 - a. We are concerned about getting approval for such a large incentive. Does the panel feel that the designs would work without an incentive? With an approved incentive?
- 2. Did the panel consider the impact of the incentive on the spending behavior during the reference period?
- 3. Does the panel have any recommendations about how to test incentives? Can the amounts or procedures be tested independently of other design features, or would we need to test them in conjunction?

1. How dependent are the designs on the incentives?

- The panel finds incentives to be an essential component of the proposed designs
- This is not a typical survey interview task
 - Journal for continuous tracking of expenditures
 - Numerous expenditures being recorded on a daily basis

2. Did the panel consider the impact of the incentive on the spending behavior during the reference period?

- The impact on expenditures was discussed, and the form and timing of the incentives need to be carefully considered and tested

3. Does the panel have any recommendations about how to test incentives? Can the amounts or procedures be tested independently of other design features, or ... in conjunction?
- The incentive structure, timing, and amounts should be tailored to the particular design
 - The panel has provided some general differences in the incentive amounts and structure across the different design options