

## Survey module

# Questionnaires and questionnaire construction and pretesting

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# Focus of the session

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- Introduce you to the basics of questionnaire construction and pretesting
- Make you a “better constructor” of questionnaires
- Assist you to collect good quality of data using appropriate tools

# Basic Survey Process

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## Steps:

1. Deciding on a mechanism
2. Drawing a sample
3. Designing the questionnaire
4. Fielding a survey and collecting the data
5. Analysis
6. Reporting

# Step 1: Deciding on a mechanism

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## Modalities for collecting data:

- Telephone
- Internet
- In-person
- Mail

## Selection:

- “To be or not to be” representative

## Step 2: Drawing a sample – WHO?

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### Who is included in your sample:

- The Public
  - Adults, non-elderly, kids, Gauteng adults
  - Voters (registered, likely, swing voters)
  - Specific health districts
  - In telephone surveys, always “...in households with telephones”
- Subgroups and oversamples
  - Africans, Coloureds, Indians, Whites
  - Youth
  - Elderly
  - Doctors, nurses, health professionals, caregivers

## Step 2: Drawing a sample – How Many?

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### Determining Sample Size?

- Decide on your analysis plan NOW!
- Know the prevalence (incidence)
- Unweighted vs. Weighted N

## Step 2: Response Rates

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### Function of:

- Design of interview / Topic
- Length of interview
- Length of field period (callback #)
- Interviewer expertise
- Oversamples
- What else is going on in the world

### Calculating Response Rates

## Step 3: Designing the questionnaire

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### It's all about the questions...

- Effect of a given word
- Balance in question wording
- Don't know answers – offered or volunteered?
- Using scales
- Question order
- Pretesting and cognitive testing



# Step 3: Questionnaire design

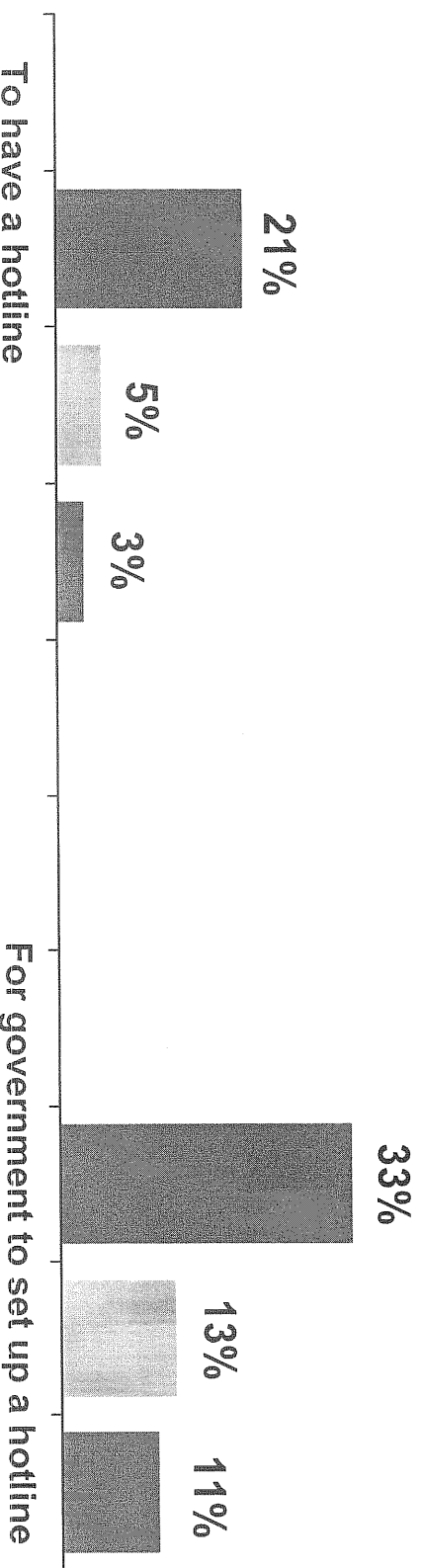
## The Effect of One Word

How important do you think it is to have a hotline telephone number people can call to get help when they have problems with their medical aid?

70%

How important do you think it is for the **GOVERNMENT** to set up a hotline telephone number people can call to get help when they have problems with their medical aid?

43%



Very Important    Somewhat Important    Not too important    Not at all important

## **Step 3: Questionnaire design**

### **Balance in question wording**

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**Which is a leading question?**

Public sector doctors are being forced out of medicine by low salaries because they can no longer afford to live on low salaries. Would you support action to increase salaries of doctors and prevent brain-drain to better-paying countries?

**OR:**

As you may know, there have been some recent proposals to improve the salaries of doctors and to prevent brain-drain. One proposal is to give doctors an OSD to increase their pay packets. Under this plan, would you favour or oppose an introduction of an OSD or provision of an immediate 50% salary increase for doctors?

## Step 3: Questionnaire design

### Balance in question wording

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#### *What's wrong with these questions?*

- Do you support the government taking action against sex workers?
- If you heard that MP X supported stricter smoking control laws, would that make you more likely to vote for her?
- Did you happen to vote in the elections in 2009?

## Step 3: Questionnaire design

### Balance in question wording

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#### Bad questions, improved:

- Do you support or oppose the government taking action against sex workers?
- If you heard that MP X supported stricter smoking control laws, would that make you more likely to vote for her, less likely to vote for her, or wouldn't it make much difference?
- Did you happen to vote in the elections in 2009, or not?

# Step 3: Questionnaire design

## Open-ended or Closed-ended?

What do you think is the most important problem in health or health care for the government to address? (top 7 answers)

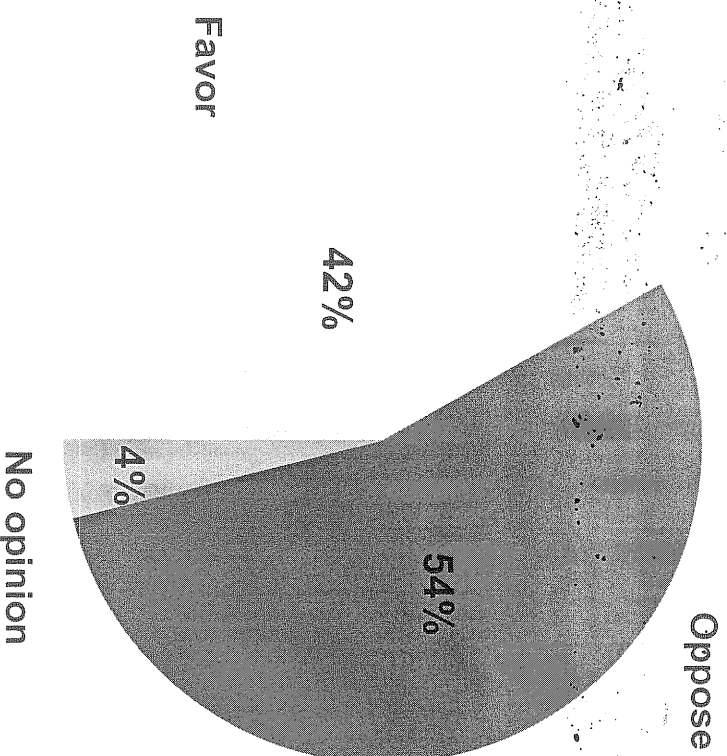
Which of the following do you think is the most important health care issue for the Government to deal with?

HIV/AIDS	15%	Helping PLWHA get access to ARVs	27%
Provision of ARVs	15%	Increasing access to health care for all South Africans	27%
Health care for all South Africans	15%	Making health care more financially sound for future generations	18%
TB, Malaria	12%		
Chronic conditions	10%	Lowering the cost of medical aid	11%
Rx coverage for seniors	8%		
Cost of medical aid	7%	Helping the poor with the cost of medical aid	8%

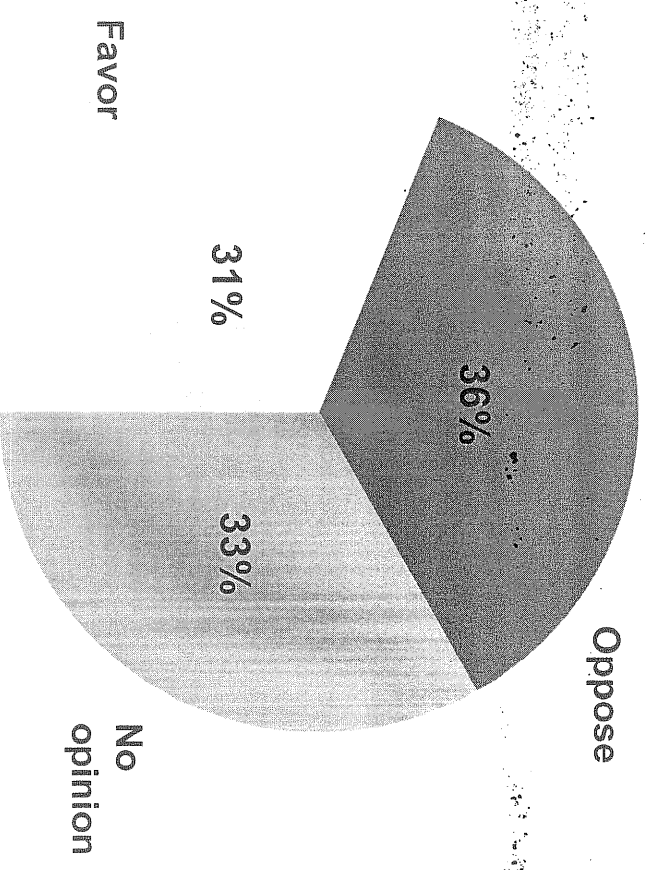
## Step 3: Questionnaire design

### Don't Know Answers – offered or volunteered?

Do you favour or oppose the government offering provinces money or "vouchers" to send their patients to private hospitals?



Do you favour or oppose the government offering provinces money or "vouchers" to send their patients to private hospitals or haven't you heard enough about that to have an opinion?



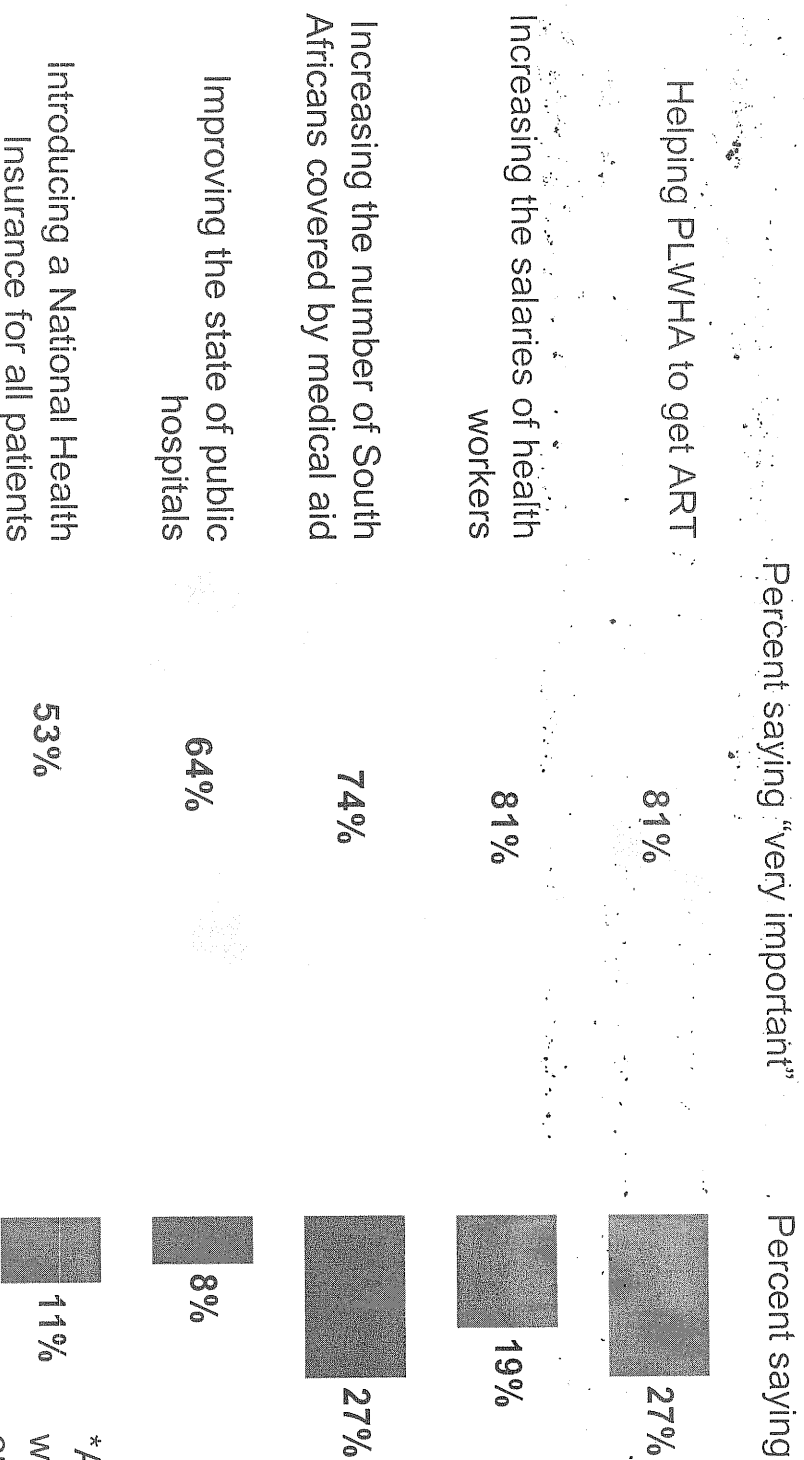
# Step 3: Questionnaire design

## Using scales – getting to “the most”

Now, I’m going to read you some different health care issues. As I read each one, please tell me how important you think it is for the President and Congress to deal with this issue – very important, somewhat important, not too important, or not important at all.

When forced to choose...

Which of the following issues you say are very important do you think is **most** important?\*



\*Also includes those who named only one issue as “very important”

## Step 3: Questionnaire design

### How questions can affect one another

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- Ask general priority questions first (e.g. most important problem facing the nation)
- Pay attention to how one question might influence answers to future questions:
  - In considering whether or not to vote for a political candidate, how important is the candidate's position on HIV/AIDS in making your choice?
  - What do you think are the two most important health care issues for the government to address?
- Decide when it would be best to “split” the sample to ask two questions that could bias one another:
  - To what age do you think boys should wait before having sexual intercourse?
  - To what age do you think girls should wait before having sexual intercourse?



## **Step 3: Questionnaire design**

### **Testing the questionnaire**

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- Pre-testing
- Cognitive testing
- Focus groups

# Example of questionnaire

## Section B: Establishment-based sex workers

Question	Question	Coding category	Code
B9	What is the type of establishment where you operate?	Hotel Bar Restaurant Brothel Flat/Apartment Other (specify) _____	1
			2
			3
			4
			5
			6

# EXERCISE

- Identify a study which you plan to conduct in the next 3 months.
- Develop a questionnaire for this study:
  - Use several (Sub)Headings for each section e.g. Demographic data, Knowledge, Attitudes, etc;
  - Indicate **Coding categories** e.g Yes/No, True/False, Agree/Disagree/Unsure, etc
  - Indicate **Codes** for each question e.g. Male = 1; Female = 2
- Pilot-test the questionnaire with two of your colleagues and make corrections as suggested

# Some references

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## Public Opinion:

Roper Center for Public Opinion Research: iPoll  
<http://roperweb.ropercenter.uconn.edu/iPOLL/>

American Association for Public Opinion Research <http://aapor.org/>

National Journal: Poll Track <http://nationaljournal.com/>

Public Agenda Online <http://publicagenda.org/>

Pew Research Center for the People and the Press  
<http://people-press.org/>

Program on International Policy Attitudes: Americans and the World  
<http://www.americans-world.org/>

## Public Opinion on Health:

Kaiser Family Foundation: Kaiser Health Poll Report  
<http://www.kff.org/healthpollreport>

Kaisernetwork.org: Health Poll Search  
[http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health\\_poll/](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/health_poll/)