### Survey Methods, Pros & Cons

Sources: Arlene Fink, “How to Conduct Surveys”, 3rd Edition; Alan Aldridge; Kevin Levine, “Surveying the Social World”

## Self-Completion Questionnaires

### Postal / E-Mail Questionnaire

**General Description:**
Paper & pencil survey, sent in the mail; e-mail attachment, completed individually

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Example Uses</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
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</table>
| Pediatric Equipment on an ambulance – *i.e.* someone needs to physically stand in front of the ambulance… | - Can reach a large geographical area  
- People are used to completing paper-and-pencil surveys  
- Can take the survey with you and complete it anywhere and anytime  
- Great for sensitive issues | - No clarification available during completion.  
- Need a motivated population to return the survey (people have too much to do)  
- Respondents must be able to read, see, and write | - Need an up-to-date address list  
- Visual cues and illustrative figures  
COSTS:  
- Follow-up mailings  
- Printing, paper, envelopes  
- Stamps  
- Incentives |

*Email considerations:* include it as an ATTACHMENT (Word Document, PDF); could fill-out electronically or fax back.

### On-the-Spot Questionnaire

**General Description:**
Paper & pencil survey, administered in person but completed individually

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| After an advisory committee meeting, you survey the attendees about the current meeting compared to past meetings | - Captive population  
- Information is obtained immediately  
- Questions can be asked as they arise  
- In some cases, surveys can be done with groups of people  
- Can gauge an immediate response to an event, etc. | - Limited to responses from just those who are on site - possible bias  
- Respondents must be able to read, see, and write  
- Possible bias from the administrator  
- Annoyance factor | - Visual cues and illustrative figures  
- Fill-out & return on site or take home & return  
COSTS:  
- Requires on-site staff/supervisor  
- Space and privacy for respondent  
- Printing & paper  
- Incentives |
**Self-Completion Questionnaires Continued**

**Internet/Web Based**

*General Description:*
Online survey; email or distribute a link (URL) to a survey which is designed and completed online

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Determine the percentage of hospitals in the State/Territory that have written pediatric inter-facility transfer agreements</td>
<td>- Possible worldwide population</td>
<td>- Need reliable access to Internet</td>
<td>- Technical expertise in-house vs. respondent expertise</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Negligible distribution costs</td>
<td>- Respondent must be able to use a browser</td>
<td>- Link to many different media types</td>
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<td>- Order of questions can be preprogrammed</td>
<td>- Respondent must be “online”</td>
<td>- Does the software import pre-written questions?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Only “acceptable” answers are allowed (validation)</td>
<td>- System can go down or be unreliable</td>
<td>- Does the hosting company have a policy for back-ups?</td>
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<td>- Can give respondent links that give additional explanation</td>
<td>- Respondents must be able to use a computer, a mouse, and/or keyboard</td>
<td>- Make sure the company has a solid “confidentiality” agreement</td>
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<td>- Data are automatically entered in a database and can be automatically analyzed OR exported to other software programs</td>
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<td>- Is the survey taken and submitted on a secure URL (SSL) - security</td>
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<td>- Branching, Piping, &amp; Skipping can be automatically programmed</td>
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<td>- Make sure you can export the survey data into various formats</td>
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<td>- Can easily track user response rate OR choose anonymous</td>
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<td>- Survey customization (branding)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Automatic Reminder, Thank You, Spell Check, and Math Calculations</td>
<td></td>
<td>COSTS:</td>
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<td>- Easy pilot testing (discover where people are abandoning the survey)</td>
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<td>- Hosting &amp; software $ - $$$$$ (depending on features)</td>
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<td>- Progress bar to inform respondents of the percentage completed</td>
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<td>- In-house programmer</td>
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<td>- Require the question to be answered</td>
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</table>
# Face-to-Face Interviews

**General Description:** Conduct interviews in person with a written script and/or prompts

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| Determine the qualifications and interest level of an individual to serve on the State/Territory EMSC Advisory Committee | - High rate of survey completion  
- Can explore answers with respondents  
- Can assist respondents with unfamiliar words or questions  
- Able to get more qualitative data | - Difficult to reach certain populations  
- Expensive and time consuming (lots of resources)  
- Some may feel reluctant to share personal information or beliefs  
- Need trained interviewers  
- Must find a suitable place to conduct interview  
- Interviewer bias (verbal or non-verbal) | - Longer more in-depth questions  
- If on-site need space and privacy  
- May be difficult or dangerous to go to person’s home  
- Visual cue cards  
COSTS:  
- Training  
- Space & travel  
- AV & transcription costs  
- Incentives |

# Focus Groups

**General Description:** A qualitative study; small group from target sample brought together to discuss the survey topic

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| Early on in the survey project, a group of 6-12 EMT-Ps are brought in to discuss their current comfort level in treating children; from this discussion initial survey questions can be developed and tested. | - Great for pre-testing your initial ideas  
- Generate, explore, and identify key ideas/concepts  
- Understand your population  
- Read non-verbal feedback  
- Helps with formal survey development  
- Can assist respondents with unfamiliar words or questions | - Bias / Small Group  
- Quality of data influenced by the moderator  
- Used to identify themes or capture ideas.  
- Some may feel reluctant to share personal information or beliefs.  
- Needed trained interviewers or moderators  
- Unable to make major decisions based on the information | - Avoid jumping to conclusions  
- Very broad questions, often with open-ended answers and limited prompting  
- Avoid Yes, No  
- Not a form of group interviewing  
- 6 to 12 people ideal  
COSTS:  
- Training  
- Travel for participants or |
### Focus Groups Continued…

- Questions can be asked as they arise
- Explore related and unanticipated topics as they arise

### Telephone Interviews

**General Description:**
Conduct interviews over the telephone with scripted questions and prompts or computer assisted

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<td>Calling different organizations to assess the inter-facility communication between various care sites</td>
<td>- Able to use computer-assisted interview software (CATI) to help with prompts and survey navigation - Can explore options with respondents - Can assist respondents with unfamiliar words or questions - Fast method - Good for sensitive information</td>
<td>- Non-response may be high if there is no obvious benefit to participation - Sales calls often masquerade as “research” calls (caller-id) - Need trained interviewers - Is the respondent reachable by phone? - If using computer-assisted interviews, will need technical knowledge</td>
<td>- Up-to-date phone numbers - Schedule for reaching respondents</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COSTS:**
- Training - Telephone charges - Computer and technical expertise - Incentives

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<tr>
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<th>moderator</th>
<th>Space</th>
<th>Incentives</th>
<th>AV &amp; transcription costs</th>
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**Considerations:**
- moderator
- Space
- Incentives
- AV & transcription costs