Author's response to reviews

Title: A telephone survey of factors affecting willingness to participate in health research surveys

Authors:

Deborah C Glass (deborah.glass@monash.edu)
Helen L Kelsall (helen.kelsall@monash.edu)
Claudia Slegers (claudiamslegers@gmail.com)
Andrew B Forbes (andrew.forbes@monash.edu)
Bebe Loff (bebe.loff@monash.edu)
Deborah Zion (Deborah.Zion@vu.edu.au)
Lin Fritschi (lin.fritschi@curtin.edu.au)

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Author's response to reviews: see over
Dear Editor

I list below our replies to the reviewer and thank her for her time. I hope that the paper is now suitable for publication.

DISCRETIONARY REVISION
I would suggest bullets at the end of the manuscript in the discussion section be replaced with text rather than bullets. This would increase the formality of the article and its impact.

Done

MAJOR COMPULSORY REVISIONS
I still feel there are some major compulsory revisions that could be made with the presentation of the data that should be made. First, Table 2 is confusing - it is hard to know what columns/rows the p-value is associated with - in the overall Chi-Square analyses.

This has been clarified in the footnotes

I wonder why authors chose not to do a regression of significant predictors of survey participation.

This has been carried out and the following text has been added to the Method and Results sections.

Method
A multivariable analysis of predictors of being willing or very willing to participate was performed using logistic regression for each participant group separately.

Results
The multivariable analyses revealed very little difference in the importance of any predictor. Exceptions were for the general population group where long term disability was no longer significant due to adjustment for age (p=0.13), and for the cohort population raising privacy issues which did not retain its statistical significance (p=0.06). In the case control study there were too few participants reporting lack of willingness to participate in order to perform a reliable multivariable analysis.

Also, I can see from the tables that sample size was limited so data from case-control and cohort study were combined, I think they are sufficiently different study designs and their motivations for participation should be different that combining them into one analysis.

The data for the case-control and cohort studies are now presented separately in Table 3 and the following text has been added to the Results:

Similar results in terms of willingness to participate by most demographic characteristics were seen for the case-control and cohort participants (Table 3). For
both groups of previous health survey participants however, long term disease or
disability did not increase their willingness to participate. The previous cohort
participants who were unwilling to participate were more likely to raise privacy
spontaneously during the interview (p=0.021) although numbers were small (1.3%).

Figure 1 needs to be labeled better and have a better title.

Figure 1 labelling has been clarified and the title now reads

Figure 1: Percent of the general population participants who were willing to take part
in health research, by whether they would receive a summary of results, by how their
name/phone number had been identified (4 options), by method of study funding (3
options), by reason for the research (3 options) and by whether the person had direct
experience/knowledge of the disease being investigated.