

Oct 13, 2022

NIMLAS Addressing Increasing Attrition Rates Working Group Meeting Minutes

Call to Order

The first meeting for the Addressing Increasing Attrition Rates working group was held on Thursday, October 13, 2022 from 12-1pm.

Attendees

Members in attendance: Mark Trappmann, Aleda Leis, Mengyao Hu, Arie Kapteyn, Carrie Karvonen-Gutierrez
(NIMLAS: Brady West, Sunghee Lee, Esther Friedman, Nia Holland)

Reports

Introduction of NIMLAS and Addressing Increasing Attrition Rates Working Group

- Leadership of NIMLAS: Brady West, Sunghee Lee, Esther Friedman
- NIMLAS is focused on creating a network for longitudinal studies of aging, and is specifically concerned with data collection and methodology within this research
- Working group will meet 3-4 times each year
- This working group will disseminate current work surrounding addressing increasing attrition rates in survey research and ensuring participants remain on a study for its entire duration.
 - This working group will provide members with an opportunity to discuss future directions for this area of research
- Other working groups include: New measurement technologies, consent to additional data collection, and improving data for minority populations
 - Refer to the NIMLAS website (nimlas.isr.umich.edu) under “Research Areas” for more information & descriptions of working groups
- Each thematic area will have an updated bibliography on the website summarizing relevant existing and new research, coming from either publications, conference presentations, or technical reports
 - Both old and new publications are welcomed (technical publications, conference presentations, journal articles, etc.)
 - Each citation will contain a summary of the resource
 - Members are encouraged to submit additional works to be added to bibliography and to assist with sharing new developments in the area

- Network-wide activities and workshops will also be offered
 - Workshops will be offered in a hybrid format
 - First workshop was on data weighting in longitudinal studies, presented by Dr. Yajuan Si
 - Workshop presenters will be compensated; network and working group members should feel free to propose ideas for new workshops
 - Workshops are free to attend and will typically be in a hybrid format, unless presenters are outside of ISR, in which case workshops will be remote
 - Presentations can be on any topic related to the working group area
 - Workshops will be recorded and added to the NIMLAS website for the entire life of the network (5+ years)
 - Materials (data sets, codes, etc.) from each workshop will be added to the workshop archive on the NIMLAS website
- Pilot proposals will be reviewed and supported throughout the year, and are representative of each working group area
 - There will be annual pilot project competitions for each of the four working group areas
 - 3-4 pilot projects will be funded each year from each of the research areas
 - Approximately four pilot projects across the working groups will be funded throughout the year
 - Each pilot project will also have related presentations, articles, etc. added to the bibliography page for each working group
 - Volunteers are needed to review pilot proposals
 - Email NIMLAS to express interest in reviewing proposals
- Membership page on NIMLAS website lists all network members as well as a sign-up form
 - Members are encouraged to share membership sign-up information with others
- Consulting services are also being provided; network members are able to provide consulting services or obtain them from other members with knowledge in specific areas
 - Consulting services can be requested, or members can request to serve as consultants (consultants will be compensated)
 - Consulting services can be requested via the consulting form on the NIMLAS website

- If members are interested in consulting, express interest in being a consultant through the interest form
 - Members will be best matched with consultants who are experts in the particular subject matter
 - Consulting services can also be used for assisting junior scholars with proposals, grants, etc.
- There will be an annual plenary meeting where members will be able to present work and contribute to the research agendas in each thematic area
 - The annual NIMLAS meeting will occur yearly (tentatively early February 2023) and will encompass all four working groups, including a workshop and pilot project presentations
 - Working groups will meet quarterly addressing new developments in each area
- Current and future events and projects will be listed on the NIMLAS website under “Related Activities”
 - Short courses, presentations, workshops, etc. will be shared here

Current Projects and New Developments

- Persons who inject drugs and are transient (Sunghee)
 - Obtaining additional contact information from respondents to attempt to reduce attrition rates
- Simulation study when using weights in longitudinal research to attempt to mitigate attrition rates (Brady)
- Understanding the differences in follow-up depending on mode (mail vs. web) (Brady)
- Length and/or amount of surveys required of respondents and the impact on attrition rates (Arie)
 - Also looking at improving question wording, how respondents are approached and recruited, and the subject of the survey and how these additional factors influence retention and attrition rates
- In longitudinal research (particularly health studies), combating aging, death, major life events (moving, family additions, etc.), in relation to their effects on attrition rates (Carrie)
 - Having a strong study coordinator aids in reducing attrition rates
 - Incorporating the study coordinator as a part of the research team is important, participants will feel more comfortable and connected with the study if they are connected to the coordinator

- Developing a strong rapport with the respondents and emphasizing the importance of the research that is being conducted to encourage continued participation
- Utilizing multiple modes of communication and multiple sources of contact information
 - Home and work visits from study coordinator
- Compensating respondents well for their time and participation in the study is also important for retaining participants
- Mitigating barriers of participation
 - Providing transportation (if needed), allowing participants to be involved when their time permits
- Panel studies in Germany and their increased attrition rates (Mark)
 - Some groups tend to be especially difficult to follow (i.e. those that are unemployed, transient, refugee populations)
 - Contact information for these populations are often constantly changing, which increases attrition rates
 - Incentives appear to be the most effective in increasing retention rates in large national panel studies
- Using FitBits to collect information and the risk of attrition in a short study
 - Utilizing the technology to determine if participants are using the device accordingly, and if not, utilizing phone call follow-up to encourage continued participation

Brainstorming ideas for group research and discussion

- Methodologies for using electronic health records to replace missing data as a result of attrition
- Investigating the importance of survey staff in improving retention
- Investigating the best use of incentives
 - Whether or not incentives should be paid before or after the study, increasing incentives in those with a high attrition propensity
 - All lower (below 50%) response propensity cases are paid a higher incentive
 - Determine if there is an impact on participants depending on the incentive amount they receive
 - Is the incentive enough to encourage participation and retention
 - Considering fairness in participants receiving different incentives
- Can be useful to have an additional contact method through an interviewer

- Prioritizing respondents for interviews depending on their propensity to respond
 - New respondents tend to have a lower response propensity
 - Changing interviewers can help with retention of interviewers
- Leveraging paradata on response data to improve retention and determine issues related to attrition

Action Items

- Submit (via email) additional items related to the working group for the organic bibliography on the NIMLAS website
 - Email nimlas-inquiry@umich.edu with papers, reports, conference presentations, abstracts, etc.
- Consider presenting a workshop in a particular working group area, contact NIMLAS at nimlas-inquiry@umich.edu to begin planning process
- If interested in offering or obtaining consulting services, refer to consulting signup form on website
- If interested in volunteering to review pilot projects, email NIMLAS at nimlas-inquiry@umich.edu
- Add articles that were shared during the meeting to bibliography on NIMLAS website
- Share new developments with the group (own findings or other projects)

Next Steps/Goals for Next Meeting

- Consider methodological implications of current projects
- Submit papers, presentations, etc. to be shared via the NIMLAS website
 - Submit via email at nimlas-inquiry@umich.edu
- Maintain a similar structure for future meetings
 - Allow members to share their work and receive feedback and input from other members
- Next meeting will be scheduled in the upcoming months via email

Adjournment

1:00 p.m.