Participation and Mode Preferences in a Questionnaire Study

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Introduction

Questionnaires are widely used in patient cohort studies. To produce valid results, a study population should be representative of the population as a whole to limit the possibility of selection bias. In this study we investigated the effect of different questionnaire modes on preferences and participation rates.

1. Methods

We randomized 750 childhood cancer survivors (CCS) across 3 study arms, in which a paper-based questionnaire was offered at different contact moments (follow-up invitations). CCS always had the possibility to complete a web-based questionnaire.

2. Results

Overall 58% CCS participated, with no significant differences between study arms. CCS, particularly unemployed and low educated, often choose to complete the paper questionnaire over the web questionnaire.

3. Discussion

To optimize participation rates in questionnaire studies, invitation strategies should be tailored to subjects’ characteristics and preferences.

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