Collection of Socially Sensitive Data: A Randomized Study Comparing the Advantages and Limitations of Self Administered Questionnaire on Computer vs. Traditional Paper Based method

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\textbf{Abstract:} This study assesses the response variation of self administered questionnaire (SAQs) on computer compared to traditional paper based SAQ. The study outcomes include response accuracy, consistency and variation based on participants' perception of ease of use, and safety of storing their personal health information on computer. The study will help to understand the acceptability of computer based SAQs in data collection of socially sensitive behaviors.

\textbf{Introduction:} Computer based self interviewing methods are increasingly considered a tool of choice for survey researchers to collect information about socially sensitive risk behaviors. Few studies have explored whether the effect of patients’ perceptions of privacy and trust of maintaining confidentiality affects the consistency of responses for the two methods.\textsuperscript{1,2}

\textbf{Objective:} To determine the consistency of responses on behavioral questionnaire regarding alcohol and other substance use, sexual behavior and depression using two similar questionnaires but different methods of administration—paper based and computerized.

\textbf{Research Design:} This is a pilot study using a randomized, crossover design.

\textbf{Methodology:} The study will be conducted at West Haven Veterans Health Administration Hospital. Each participant will complete a survey and debriefing phase. Forms for the computer based survey have been designed on a web based clinical data management system. The SAQs include questions on alcohol & sexual behavior, substance abuse and depression screening. Questions on computer usability, and anxiety and health literacy have been included. A research team member will ask for participants’ perception of ease of use, and safety of storing their personal health information on computer. Time taken to complete each questionnaire will be recorded. Data from computer assisted SAQs will be transferred directly to a centralized database while data from paper based SAQs will be entered manually into the database.

\textbf{Findings:} The study has been approved and data will be collected and analyzed by September.

\textbf{Evaluation:} The primary study outcomes are speed, accuracy, consistency of response, computer experience anxiety participants’ perception of ease of use, and safety of storing their personal health information on the computer vs. paper based questionnaire.

\textbf{Conclusion:} This study will help to understand better, the acceptability of using computers to administer SAQs for data collection of different socially sensitive risk behaviors recall questions compared to paper based SAQ and provide new and important information about the barriers in utilization of information technology.


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