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Effect of data collection mode and ethnicity of interviewer on response rates and self-reported alcohol use among Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands: an experimental study

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Introduction. Methodological problems accompany alcohol research among Turks and Moroccans in the Netherlands. Therefore, the validity of conclusions drawn from alcohol studies among these groups has been questioned. The aim of the present study was to gain more insight into the reliability and validity of results from different data collection modes. More specifically, the effect of data collection mode (i.e. face-to-face interview vs. mailed survey) and ethnicity of interviewers (i.e. Dutch vs. Turkish/Moroccan) on response rates and alcohol reports was tested among second-generation Turks and Moroccans in Rotterdam.

Methods. An experimental study was performed in which 269 Turks (n = 744) and 271 Moroccans (n = 753) were interviewed face-to-face, of which half was ethnically matched to the interviewer and the other half was allocated to a Dutch interviewer. The remainder of both samples received a mailed questionnaire.

Results. Moroccans more often responded to a face-to-face interview than to a mailed questionnaire whereas no effect of method on response rates was found among Turks. Furthermore, no effect of ethnicity of interviewer on response rates was demonstrated. With regard to effects on alcohol reports, Moroccans reported higher alcohol use in the mailed survey compared to the face-to-face interview, whereas no effect of method on alcohol reports was found among Turks. However, among Turks a higher prevalence of alcohol use during the past six months was reported when interviewed by a Dutch interviewer compared to an ethnically matched interviewer. Among Moroccans, no effect of the ethnicity of the interviewer on alcohol reports was found.

Conclusions. Among second-generation Moroccans, mail surveys seem most suitable to measure alcohol use. However, among second-generation Turks, interviews held by Dutch interviewers seem to be the most appropriate method to study the prevalence of alcohol use.

The use of tobacco and related substances in ethnic minorities: The development of a culturally valid measure

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Introduction. Internationally, there is a drive for equality in health care for all ethnic and migrant groups. To achieve this, good quality data are essential. When data collection instruments designed for speakers of one language are simply translated into other, ethnic minority languages, measurement error can result from inadequate translation procedures, inappropriate content, insensitivity of items and the failure of researchers to familiarise themselves with cultural norms and beliefs. This was recently demonstrated by us for tobacco and alcohol surveys in the UK. We have also discussed guidelines on maximising cross-cultural comparability. When data are used to make comparisons, the questions asked must be conceptually equivalent and appropriate for all groups compared. This paper will report on ongoing research to improve national questionnaires on self-reported use of tobacco and related substances. Objectives: to ascertain which are the key questions in existing survey instruments; to assess cultural acceptability and sensitivity of the questions; to test the conceptual equivalence of the questions in each of four languages.

Methods. Project workers who are bi-lingual in English and Cantonese, Bengali/Sylheti, Punjabi or Urdu have been recruited to interview 10 representatives of each language group. Participants are encouraged to comment upon the linguistic and cultural appropriateness of the translated questionnaire items. The 40 people being recruited will form panels to be consulted throughout the project.

Results. A translated tobacco-related questionnaire has been developed. Early results indicate challenging methodological issues to be addressed in working through bi-lingual workers without direct control of the process by the researchers. Both translation problems and cultural insensitivities have been uncovered. The process of cross-cultural adaptation is extremely difficult.

Conclusions. Implementing guidelines on achieving cross-cultural comparability is essential in public health research, but is surprisingly arduous. Pooling of field experience, expertise and resources is needed to ease the task in Europe.

Assessing cultural and linguistic appropriateness of the Rose Angina questionnaire in three ethnic groups

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Introduction. Meeting the needs of migrant groups in Europe requires cross-culturally valid questionnaires, a substantial challenge to researchers. The Rose Angina Questionnaire (RAQ) is an important measure of coronary heart disease prevalence. It consists