



Design, Implementation, and Analysis: An Exploration of Respondent Driven Sampling

Date and Venue

16-17 June, 2011
London, United Kingdom

Institute of Education
University of London

Conference Aims

The purpose of this conference is to bring together statisticians and survey methodologists developing Respondent Driven Sampling (RDS) with researchers using the method to survey immigrants. RDS utilizes social networks to find, survey, and develop inference on "hidden populations" like sex workers, drug users, and migrant workers. The method was introduced in 1997 and has since become widely used, yet RDS is often incorrectly implemented and the most recent statistical developments can take years to come into practice. Bringing together researchers using RDS methodology with leading statisticians and survey methodologists will further the aims of all three, by informing theory with practice and practice with the latest developments in statistical and methodological theory. The conference will also inform future applications of the method on migrant populations.

Plans for Publication and Dissemination

Papers will be collected and made available to participants in advance. In addition presentations from the conference will be uploaded on the conference web pages and made freely available to all, subject to participants' consent. Pending interest, we hope to further disseminate conference papers as either a conference volume, a special issue of the Royal Statistical Society – RSS(A) – or both. The body of this publication, either as a volume or a special issue, would mirror the three interrelated components of the conference: a) statistical developments in RDS, b) applying statistical insight with new survey methods for immigrant populations, and c) case studies of RDS findings on immigrants in Europe. To our knowledge, no such current combination of statistical, practical, and substantive research on RDS has been published, though one of our invited speakers, Lisa Johnston, has completed a useful manual together with collaborators from the US Center for Disease Control. Given increased interest in the topic from a variety of social science disciplines as well as social statisticians, and the prominence of the invited speakers, we would expect wide readership.

Conference Plan

The conference will last two days and take place at the Institute of Education, University of London in Central London. The conference will be held in seminar format, consisting of approximately 50 participants. Participants will include 10-15 invited RDS social statisticians, methodologists, and sociologists applying RDS methodology to survey immigrant populations. The rest of the participants (“observing” participants) will be drawn from social scientists and statisticians interested in the method, and spaces allotted on a first come-first serve basis. Observing participants will be self-funded.

Invited participants will prepare papers and work in progress for presentation and potential publication in a conference volume/special issue. These papers will be disseminated online prior to the conference, and all participants (invited and observing) will be required to read the papers in advance of the meeting. On the first day, invited participants will briefly present the papers (20 minutes per presentation) before opening up each meeting for discussion and questions. Coffee/Tea and Lunch will be provided for all participants, dinner will be for invited participants only.

On the second day, the morning will consist of small group meetings (6 people in each) between invited and observing participants. This “workshop” format will allow participants interested in pursuing RDS methods in their own research the opportunity to discuss their plans and ask questions of invited experts in a smaller group setting. At least one week prior to the workshop, we will offer 8 small group sessions to observing participants (4 small groups per 1.5 hour session). Each small group session will consist of invited experts and 3 observing participants interested in the method, who want to exploit this opportunity to develop their understanding and address their particular questions. If desired, additional observing participants at earlier stages of their research plans may be invited to listen in on the discussions. The small groups can exchange ideas for future research and expected problems in design, implementation, and analysis together. We think this will provide a unique opportunity for practical experience and challenges to directly inform future statistical development in the RDS field – and for the future practitioners of RDS to benefit from statistical and methodological expertise at the *onset* of their projects.

Revised Programme

Day One: Invited Paper Presentations

8:30 – 9:30 Tea/Coffee and Registration

9:30 – 11:00 Statistical Developments in RDS I

Douglas Heckathorn, Professor, Cornell University
"RDS - Testing Assumptions: Sampling with Replacement"

Simon Frost, University Senior Lecturer, Cambridge
"Network sizes, homophily, and RDS"

11:30 – 13:00 Statistical Developments in RDS II

Krista Gile, Assistant Professor, University of Massachusetts Amherst
"New methods for inference from Respondent-Driven Sampling Data"

Matthew Salganik, Assistant Professor, Princeton University
"TBD"

Richard White, Senior Lecturer, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
"An empirical evaluation of Respondent-Driven Sampling"

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch and Discussion

14:00 – 15:30 Applying RDS to Migration Populations I

Peter Muhlau, Lecturer, Trinity College Dublin
"Respondent-driven sampling as sampling method for migrant communities: Experiences from 'Polonia in Dublin'"

Lisa Johnston, Assistant Professor, Tulane University School of International Public Health and Tropical Medicine, Senior Analyst with University of California, San Francisco, Global Health Sciences; Independent Consultant.
"Formative Research to determine quantitative sampling methodologies: the feasibility of using respondent driven sampling among mobile populations in the Dominican Republic"

Andrew Cleary, Survey Researcher, Ipsos Mori London
"Adapting RDS for the study of new migrants in London"

15:30 – 16:00 Tea and Coffee

16:30 – 18:00 Applying RDS to Migration Populations II

Tetiana Saliuk, Research & Evaluation Program Manager, International HIV/AIDS Alliance
"TBD"

Renee Luthra, Senior Research Officer, University of Essex
"RDS analysis with altered sampling methods"

Guri Tyldum, Researcher, Fafo
"Lessons learned from RDS-surveys among Polish migrants in the Scandinavian countries 2006 to 2010. Practical challenges, identifying biases and getting the network variable right"

19:00 Dinner

Day Two: Workshop and Future Plans

9:00 – 10:30 Small Groups I
Parallel small group workshop sessions

10:30 – 11:00 Tea and Coffee

11:00 – 12:30 Small Groups II
Parallel small group workshop sessions

12:30 – 13:30 Lunch for Invited Participants

13:30 - 18:00 Book Planning/RSS Special Issue (Invited Participants Only)