

Maximising Response: The HILDA Survey Experience

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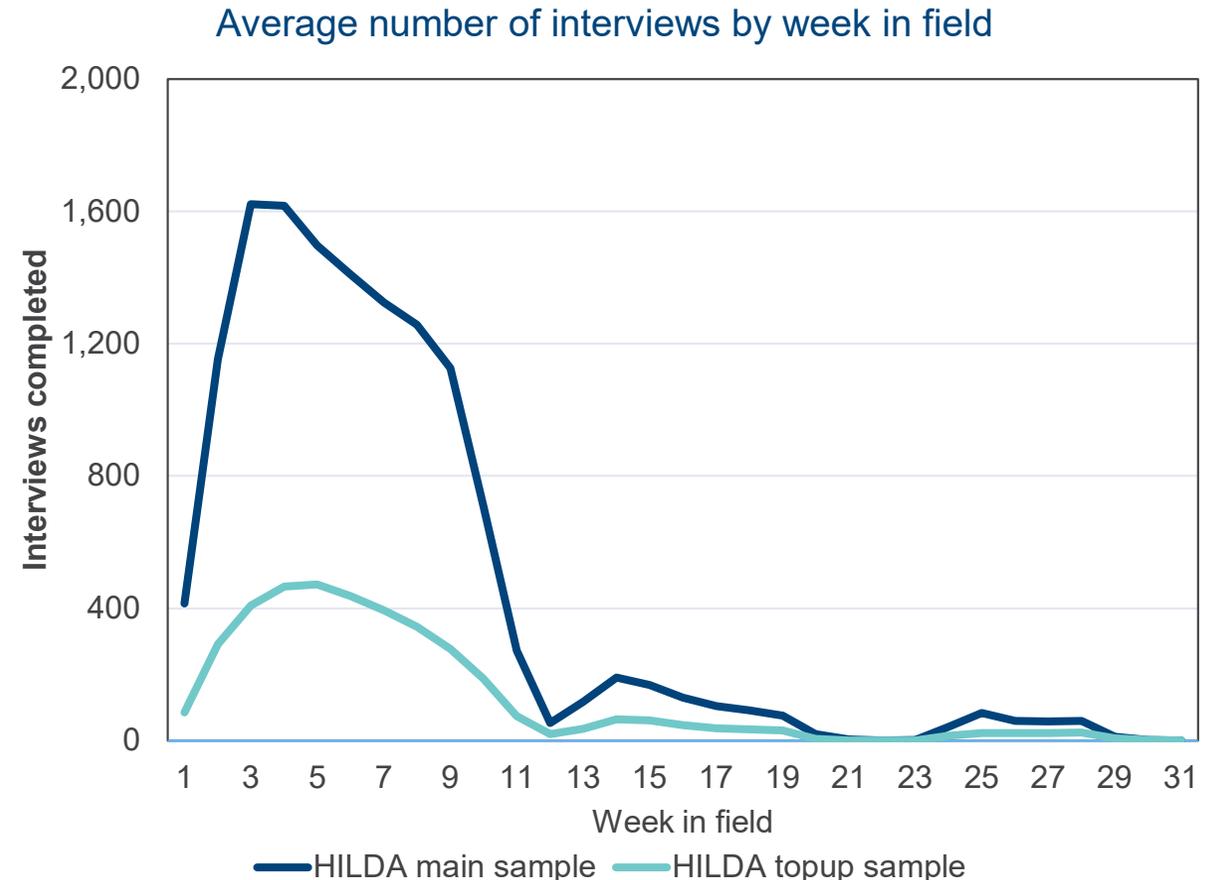
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Introducing HILDA...

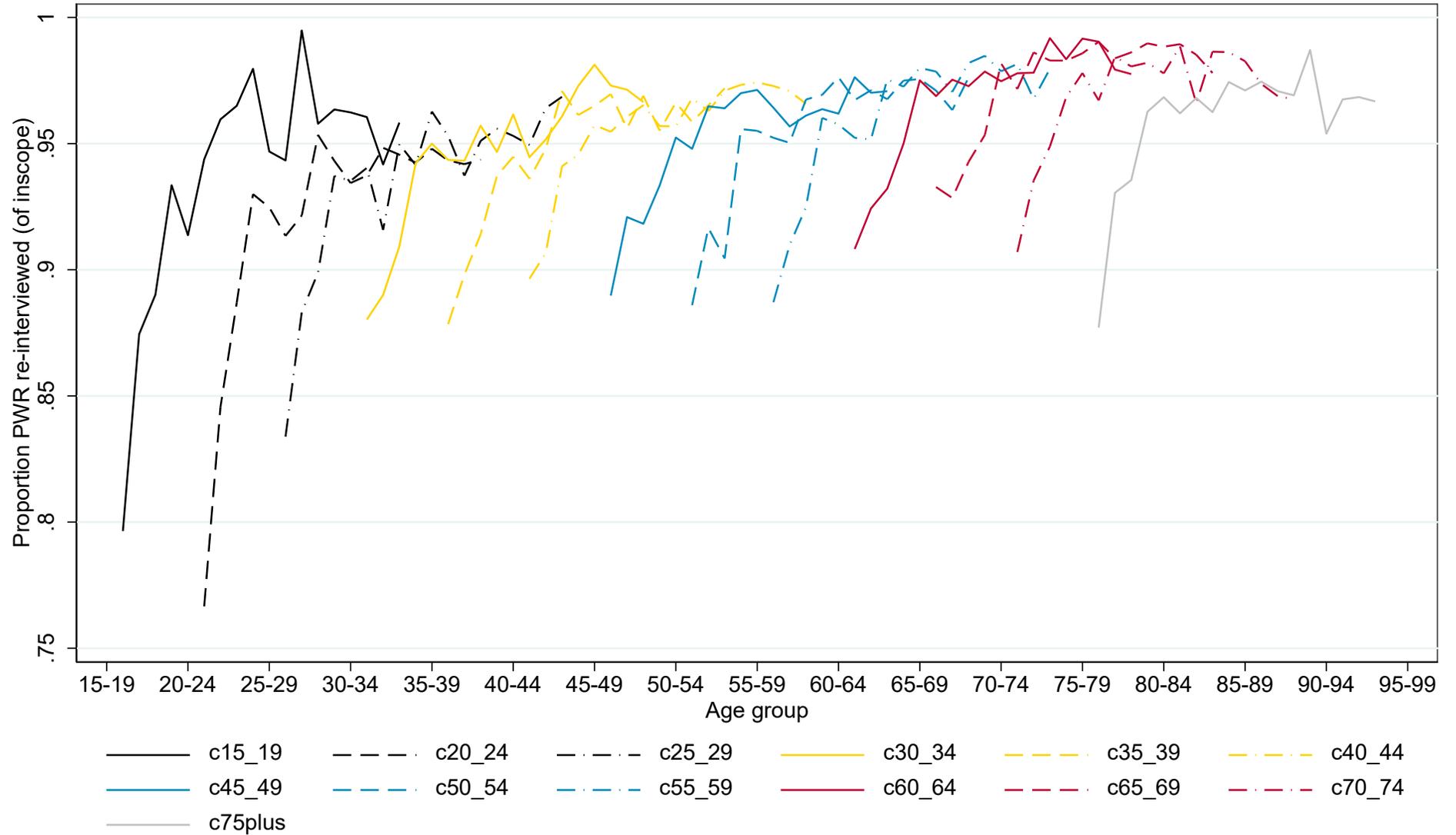
- Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) Survey
 - Household panel study
 - Conducted annually since 2001
- Funded and owned by the Australian Government
 - Survey manager is the Melbourne Institute: Applied Economic & Social Research, University of Melbourne
 - Fieldwork subcontractor is Roy Morgan
- Based on other household panel studies
 - British Household Panel Survey (BHPS)
 - German Socio-economic Panel (SOEP)
- 7682 households in wave 1, extra 2153 households added in general topup in wave

Fieldwork

- Face-to-face interviews (10% by phone)
 - Household + individual (2 adult HH=85 mins)
 - Interview all people in HH aged 15+
- Plus Self-Completion Questionnaire
- Three stages of fieldwork: 90% in first stage, 8% in second and 2% in third
- Cash incentives
 - Household (W1-4)
 - Individual + household bonus (W5-19)
 - Individual + SCQ (W20-21)



Previous wave resp re-ivwd



Chasing hard-to-get cases

- Three research questions
 - Are hard-to-get cases that are interviewed different from other interviewed cases?
 - Do cases that require a lot of effort in one survey wave require a lot of effort in all waves?
 - Can easy-to-get cases be re-weighted to eliminate biases arising from not interviewing hard-to-get cases?
- Five definitions of hard-to-get
 - Interviewed in follow up stage of fieldwork (~10%)
 - Interviewed after New Year (~2.5%)
 - Initially refused (~5%)
 - 7+ calls to HH before individual interviewed (~10%)
 - 13+ calls to HH before individual interviewed (~1%)

Findings

- Survey respondents who are hard-to-get, regardless of the definition, are distinctly different from easy-to-get cases
- Being hard-to-get is mostly not a persistent state: 80-90% will be easy-to-get in the next wave
- Could curtail fieldwork without noticeably affecting population estimates if cap the number of calls to HH to 12. Biases rectified through weighting
- With more significant curtailment activities, have greater cost savings but effects on population estimates are more serious
 - Can fix majority of biases in person and household characteristics with weights
 - Bias in estimates of change more problematic

Impact on estimates of change

	Follow-up	New Year	Initial refuser	7+ calls	13+ calls
Separated/widowed last 5 years	-	-	-	-	.
Had child in last 5 years
Increase in 5-year average income	-	-	-	-	.
Started new job in last year
Retired in last year	-
Onset of long term health condition in last 5 years
Moved in last 5 years	-	-	-	-	.
Moved in last year	-
Transition from not own home to own	+	.	.	+	.

Re-engaging previous wave non-respondents

- Is the decision to re-engage different from decision to continue participation?
- Three household panels
 - HILDA Survey
 - British Household Panel Survey
 - German Socio-economic Panel
- Model re-engagement at t given non-response at $t-1$
- Model response at t given response at

Percentage of previous wave non-respondents converted (W1 respondents)

	% all non-respondents converted (W3-W9)	% all non-respondents issued to field converted (Ave W3-9)
HILDA	22 -> 7	26
BHPS	17 -> 4	16
SOEP AB	13 -> 2	33
SOEP F	10 -> 2	23

Findings

	Re-engaging non-respondents	Continuing participation
Interviewer-respondent continuity	negative	positive
Change in survey mode	no effect	negative
Face-to-face (vs phone)	positive	positive
Long time since last interview	negative	n/a
Refusal (vs other reason for non-response)	negative	n/a
Partial household response	no effect	negative
Change of address	positive	negative
Experienced (vs new) interviewer if changed and no change of address	positive	no effect

Conclusions

- Chasing the hard-to-get cases is worth it
 - Hard-to-get is not a persistent state
 - They are distinctly different from easy-to-get cases
 - Weighting does not correct estimates from easy-to-get cases alone especially wrt change
- Re-engagement is a different decision to continued participation
 - Consider feasibility of changing interviewer or ensure interviewer is armed with toolkit of several fresh approaches
 - Re-engage non-respondents as soon as possible
 - Non-refusals are more productive than refusals but refusals can still be re-engaged
 - When respondent moves, this can be a good opportunity to re-engage

Further information

- Watson, N., and Wooden, M. (2019), 'Chasing hard-to-get cases in panel surveys: Is it worth it?', *Methods, Data, Analyses*, 13(2), 199-222.
- Watson, N., Leissou, E., Guyer, H., and Wooden, M. (2019), 'Best practices for panel maintenance and retention', in T.P. Johnson, B. Pennell, I.A.L. Stoop, and B. Dorer (ed.), *Advances in Comparative Survey Methods*, Wiley, New York, pp. 597-622.
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- Watson, N., and Wooden, M. (2009), 'Identifying factors affecting longitudinal survey response', in P. Lynn (ed.), *Methodology of Longitudinal Surveys*, Wiley, Chichester, pp. 157-181.