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Session 1 – Invited paper

**VICTIM SURVEY METHODOLOGY: MODE, SAMPLE DESIGN AND OTHER
ASPECTS - RESULTS FROM THE INVENTORY OF VICTIMISATION SURVEYS**

Submitted by Home Office, UK*

1. The inventory of victimisation surveys conducted by UNECE-UNODC in 2005 received replies from 33 countries who provided information about 78 surveys. 55 of these surveys are current (based on a suggested definition of: the survey runs continuously or it was conducted in 2004/5 or it is planned to run in the future).
2. 53 surveys were classified in the questionnaire as providing national data and information relating to at least a further 9 indicated they were also national surveys making 62 in total. Combining the national information with the timing showed that 46 surveys were current and national. 26 countries had at least one current national survey measuring victimisation.
3. These introductory figures provide the basis for our analysis of the methodological and sampling information about national victimisation surveys. We can:
 - consider all the surveys for which we have information to use as a source for the development of harmonised guidance / questions for national crime surveys
 - note how this is distributed by country

* Paper prepared by Alison Walker, Crime Surveys, Home Office. The results contained in this paper must be treated as provisional.

- describe the current situation.

4. About two thirds of the replies were describing surveys specifically designed to measure victimisation (either in general or against women) while the other third refer to parts of multipurpose surveys. This needs to be noted when considering the elements of the design in more detail, in that designs of multipurpose surveys may not be the ideal for measuring victimisation.

5. The vast majority of victimisation questions are in cross sectional surveys. Eight surveys containing victimisation surveys were panel surveys and 5 had a mixed design. Nine of these panel surveys are current and national (Australia, France, Hungary, Mexico, Sweden, Switzerland and the USA).

Mode

6. The inventory identified the following modes for conduct of a survey:

- Face to face interviews at the respondent's home using paper questionnaire
- Face to face interviews at the respondent's home using electronic questionnaire - CAPI
- Face to face interviews elsewhere (please specify):
- Self-administered questionnaires (CASI)
- Self-administered questionnaires (Postal questionnaire)
- Self-administered questionnaires (Other, please specify:)
- Telephone interviews (CATI)
- Internet survey
- Combinations or other modes (please specify)

7. Thirteen surveys used a mix of modes. More than half of the surveys were based on some type or combination of face to face interviews in the home, with 16 surveys using electronic data collection (CAPI) and 31 surveys using paper. Three surveys used face to face but not in the home. Four surveys used electronic self completion (all combined with some form of face to face). Six were postal and four 'other' self completion (2 school surveys, one left with respondent and collected later and one paper used for sensitive questions in combination with face to face).

8. Thirty four surveys used CATI (telephone interviewing). For the majority this was the single mode but for eight surveys this was used in conjunction with a face to face interview and in one case with a postal survey. In two cases it was noted that telephone interviewing was supported by face to face where telephone numbers were not available.

9. No country reported using internet based victimisation surveys.

10. 'Current surveys' are less likely to be paper based (fewer face to face and fewer postal). Nine surveys use a mix of modes. Well over half of the surveys are based on some type or combination of face to face interviews in the home, with 15 surveys using electronic data collection (CAPI) and 21 surveys using paper. Three are postal. Twenty four 'current surveys' are using CATI (telephone interviewing). For the majority this is the single mode but for seven surveys this is used in conjunction with a face to face interview and in one case with a postal survey. The proportion of surveys using CATI in combination with another mode is higher among current surveys than among all surveys

Mode by country

11. Seventeen countries have experience of face to face paper based interviews (although this figure may be higher as some countries will have changed from paper based surveys to CAPI) and 10 countries have experience of CAPI. Sixteen countries have experience of telephone based interviews (CATI) - 7 of whom also have experience of face to face interviews.

Some comments on mode

12. The UK has some useful experience in relation to mode effect on results. The BCS includes a combination of face to face and self completion for more sensitive topics. These include drug use and domestic violence and sexual assault. Domestic violence is also included in the face to face section to allow for comparison with other types of victimisation. The self-completion module of the 2001 BCS produces substantially higher estimates than the main face-to-face BCS. A broad comparison between the prevalence measures (per cent victim once or more) shows that the self-completion finds a rate of approximately 5 times that of the face-to-face BCS.

HORS 276 - [Domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking: Findings from the British Crime Survey](#)

13. Scotland has recently been involved in a move from paper face to face to telephone (in order to increase the sample size to allow regional analyses). Calibration work has shown a marked difference between the victimisation levels found by both methods. However it had been expected that telephone survey levels would be lower because mobile only households are more likely to comprise young people and young men are more likely to be victims. Instead it identified higher victimisation rates from the telephone survey. One of the conclusions is that there is self selection bias. This results mainly from a greater proportion of non-victims refusing on the phone than in the face to face situation. It was also thought possible that there may have been some positive self selection bias among victims since the telephone individual random sampling method of 'last birthday' is easier to manipulate than the face to face situation where the interviewer lists everyone in the household and then makes a selection. This was partially addressed by using a random number selection of two person households.

<http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/47121/0020932.pdf>

Interviewers

14. The use of in-house or external interviewers is associated with mode (either in helping determine it or resulting from the decision on mode).

In 31 surveys, in-house interviewers were used compared with 39 where an external company was used. One survey used both. The choice of interviewers was equally divided for face to face paper and CAPI but external interviewers were more likely to have conducted CATI surveys (19 compared with 11 in house). Looking at 'current surveys' showed 21 in-house, 27 external so there was no indication of a shift over time.

15. This seems to be a surprisingly high use of in-house interviewers from the British point of view. It may be worthy some further analysis following discussion at the meeting.

16. It may be of interest to note here that BCS has always used external organisations with a contract now being re-tendered every three years. However one of the external contractors is the

UK National Statistical Institute: the Office for National Statistics who maintain their own fieldforce of interviewers.

What sort of sampling techniques do victimisation surveys use?

17. 54 surveys used a multistage sample and 16 used a simple probability sample. All surveys with a multistage sample identified one or more stratifiers, two thirds identified 2 or more. The most frequently used stratifier was geographical area (44 surveys) followed by degree of urbanisation (25) and then age and sex - used by 18 surveys for each. A few surveys identified nationality/population group as a stratifier. Other stratifiers mentioned were: socio-economic group and education. The US survey was the only one to stratify by police recorded crime.

18. Of the 54 surveys using multistage sampling, 15 used over-sampling for specific population groups. Six identified specific ethnic/ national groups or those living in a specific locality and seven identified specific area types or places. Other over sampling involved age, sex or other socio-demographic indicators.

Only 9 surveys used a substitution strategy to reach the desired sample size for certain groups.

Current surveys only

19. 39 surveys are using a multistage sample and 11 are using a simple probability sample – similar ratio to overall. The distribution of type of stratifiers was also similar to overall. Of the 39 surveys using multistage sampling, 11 are using over-sampling for specific population groups.

Household or individual selection

20. In 52 surveys, households were selected initially – of these, the majority interviewed one person only:

- 37 interviewed one person only
- 3 surveys interviewed everyone in the household
- 12 surveys interviewed everyone of a certain age in the household or some other sub selection

21. For selection of an individual in the household, 17 surveys used a random method, a further 17 used a birthday method, used any responsible adult and 9 used other methods.

22. In 24 surveys one individual was selected initially. It is not possible to say in how many cases this was the only person interviewed.

23. However, this does mean that overall most surveys interviewed only one person in the household. This may raise some discussion about the effect this has on the measurement of household crime and how countries deal with these definitions.

Kaokku will be talking about content tomorrow in the session on...so we will be able to see what household information was collected.

Approach

24. 33 surveys sent an advance letter but 23 surveys gave no answer to this question (including BCS). The BCS does in fact send an advance letter which now includes postage stamps as an incentive – which we can maybe discuss in more detail in the response session. Since this question was missed by so many respondents it may be worth following this up to get a better picture of the extent of this practice perhaps set in the context of the general practice within different countries and the relationship to response.

Sex of interviewers

25. Just under half of the surveys of the general pop used both male and female interviewers in roughly equal numbers, for most of the rest, female interviewers were in the majority. Surveys of violence against women were more likely to use women only interviewers (7 women only, 6 where the majority were women) but 8 used both men and women interviewers. The number of interviewers varied between 2 and over a thousand, averaging at around 220. (The higher numbers need clarifying for accuracy and interpretation.)

Size and geography of the sample

26. 75 surveys gave details of sample size, 10 gave numbers of households only, 37 gave numbers of individuals only and 28 gave both.

27. Surveys varied in size from 400 to 60,000 households and from 333 to 75000 individuals (some surveys only supplied numbers of household or numbers of individuals). 19 surveys included 10,000 people or more and 13 included 10,000 households or more. (7 of these were the same surveys). It should be noted that some of the very large surveys were the multipurpose ones which included victimisation questions.

28. 16 countries had surveys with samples of 10,000 or more households or individuals) and in all but two of these countries the surveys are current and national.

29. 23 surveys were analysed at first regional level and 7 were analysed at second regional level.

Conclusions

- A large number of countries have experience of different methodologies in design and sampling.
- Many of the surveys are based on large samples.
- Use of in-house /external interviewers is evenly divided.
- The only marked difference between the overall situation and the ‘current’ surveys is the move away from paper but not from face to face.
