



Increasing response rates in cell frames: Results from an incentive and voicemail experiment

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RDD response rates

- RDD (random digit dial) response rates have been on the decline for the past few decades (AAPOR, 2010)
 - Mostly due to noncontacts, as well as refusals, other “noninterviews” and undetermined eligibility
- In light of this downward trend, survey methodologists are looking for ways to increase response rates (within constrained budgets)

Cell phone sample frames

- Cell phone response rates are even lower than traditional landline RDD surveys, by about 5%
- Mostly due to a higher refusal rate
- Unknown eligibility also higher among cell

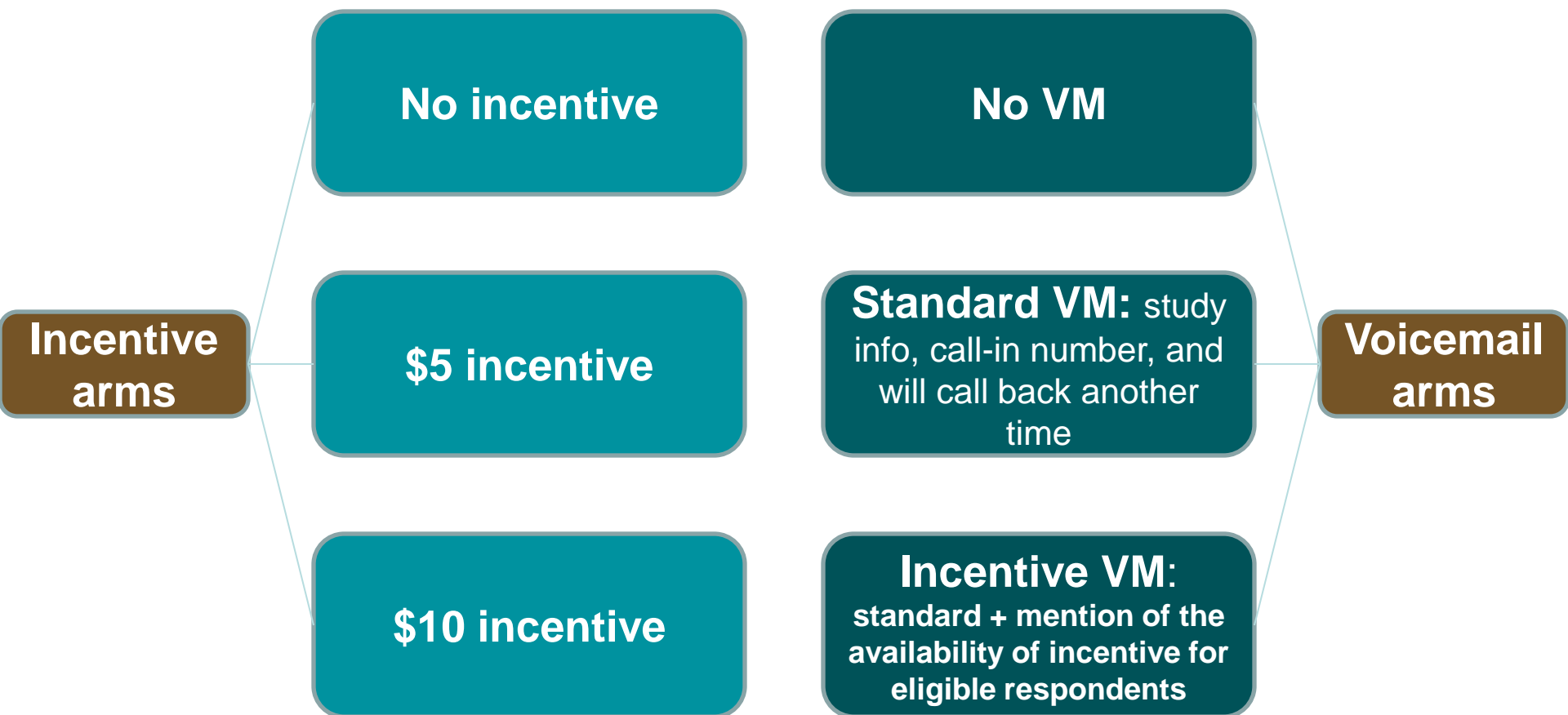
How might we increase response rates?

- Incentives (reimburse or compensate)
 - Respondents often remunerated because of potential cost of call
 - As cell billing structures change over time, not clear whether necessary
 - Evidence on utility of incentives mixed, limited
 - AAPOR Cell Phone Task Force Report recommends further experiments on utility
- Voicemails
 - Evidence also limited and mixed

Objective

- Evaluate how cell phone users respond to different incentive and voicemail conditions independently and combined

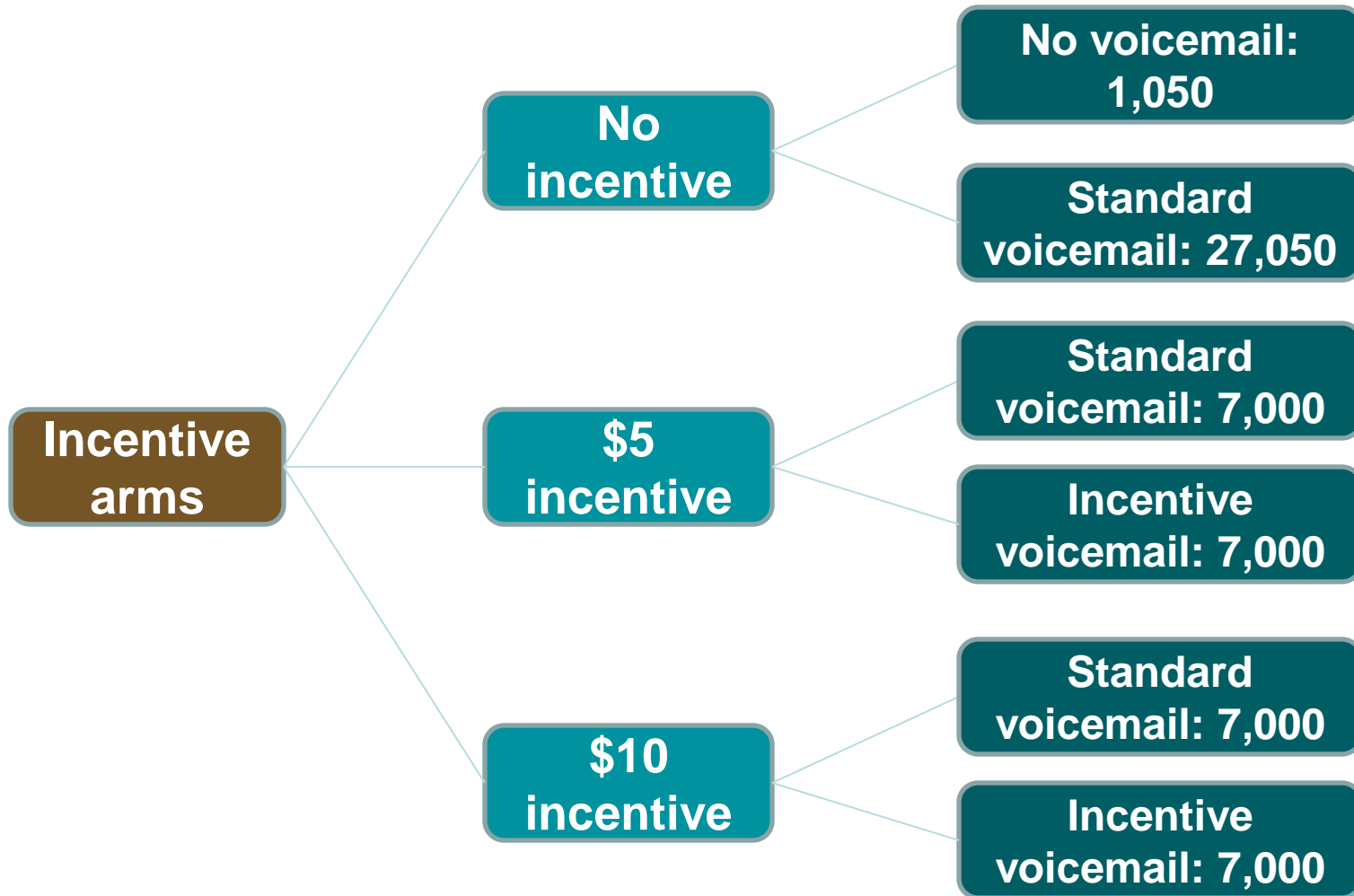
Experimental conditions



Methods – data and sample

- 2011 MN Health Access Survey
- Dual frame survey targeting 11,000 completes
 - 7000 landline
 - 4000 cell
- Conducted from Sep to Dec 2011
- Experiment in cell phone frame alone

Experiment



Analysis

- Compare response rates (AAPOR RR 4) and ratio of complete to eligible for:
 - 3 VM arms
 - 3 incentive arms
 - 6 VM*incentive arms
 - RR4 considers complete/partial interviews, refusals/breakoffs, non-contacts, and % of unknown eligible thought to be eligible
- Compare mean # of calls to complete among those who received VM
- Compare % providing contact info to receive incentive across arms, and % requesting incentive in non-incentive conditions

Table 1. Voicemail conditions

Arm	Total contacts	Completes	% completes among eligible	Response rate (AAPOR RR4)
No VM	1874	139	87.4%	39.2%
Standard VM	44355	3048	90.1%	40.5%
Incentive VM	16239	1140	93.5% ^{**} , ^{***}	40.4%
Overall	62468	4327	90.9%	40.4%

Table 2. Incentive conditions

Arm	Total contacts	Completes	% completes among eligible	Response rate (AAPOR RR4)
No incentive	31235	2185	89.7%	40.5%
\$5 incentive	15617	1047	92.4%*	40.5%
\$10 Incentive	15616	1095	92.0%*	40.2%
Overall	62468	4327	90.9%	40.4%

Table 3. Voicemail x incentive conditions

Arm	Total contacts	Completes	% complete among eligible	Response rate (AAPOR RR 4)
No incentive, standard VM	29361	2046	89.8%	40.5%
No incentive, no VM	1874	139	87.4%	39.2%
\$5 incentive, incentive VM	8118	560	94.1%**	40.0%
\$5 incentive, standard VM	7449	487	90.5%	41.0%
\$10 incentive, incentive VM	8121	580	92.9%*	40.7%
\$10 incentive, standard VM	7495	515	91.0%	39.6%
Overall	62468	4327	90.9%	40.4%

Table 4. Mean calls to complete among those receiving voicemail

Arm	Total contacts	Completes	Mean calls (SD)
No incentive, standard VM	13223	1106	5.08 (2.42)
\$5 incentive, incentive VM	3629	321	5.28 (2.55)
\$5 incentive, standard VM	3348	265	5.14 (2.51)
\$10 incentive, incentive VM	3665	320	5.03 (2.46)
\$10 incentive, standard VM	3343	269	5.13 (2.60)
Overall	27208	2281	5.11 (2.47)

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Table 5. Percent of respondents providing contact info for incentive

Arm	Completes (request \$)	% provided contact info
No incentive	2185 (337)	73.6%
\$5 incentive	1047	55.0%***
\$10 incentive	1095	65.2%** ,***

Summary

- No impact on response rates for VM, incentive, or joint VM*incentive conditions
- Incentive VM appears to influence completion among those eligible
 - 87% vs. 90% vs. 94%
- Incentive VM had no impact on # call attempts
- Those requesting compensation and those offered larger compensation are more likely to provide contact information

Limitations

- Only tested two levels of incentive (\$5 and \$10); not clear whether a larger incentive would have had a greater effect
 - Is there a “tipping point” where incentive does affect response?
 - Lengthier surveys may require incentives to encourage response

Implications

- Offering incentives/reimbursement in order to increase response rates in cell frames may not be necessary
- Even if offering incentive, not all callers will provide contact information to receive
- Provide incentive to those who request

Next steps

- Evaluate demographic differences in callers who provided contact info in order to receive incentive and those who did not
- Examine demographics of callers not in incentive groups who requested remuneration

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