THE NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION SURVEY:

DEVELOPMENT OF STRATEGIES TO INCLUDE DEAF RESPONDENTS IN AN RDD TELEPHONE SURVEY

Lorayn Olson, Ph.D., Abt Associates
Ann-Sofi Rodén, Abt Associates
T. Christopher Brogan, Abt Associates
Robert A. Wright, National Center for Health Statistics
J. Michael Dennis, Ph.D., Abt Associates
Corinna A. Crawford, Abt Associates
Introduction

- The National Immunization Survey (NIS) is developing methods to make it possible for all sampled households to participate in this telephone survey.
The National Immunization Survey

- The NIS is sponsored by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- Interviews are conducted in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and 27 urban areas.
- 1.9 million telephone numbers are dialed each year.
Defining The Population

• What proportion of parents with a child between 18 months and 3 years of age live in a household that cannot be reached through voice communication using a telephone?
• How many of these households could be reached through the use of a TTY (teletype) or TDD (telecommunications device for the deaf) machine?
Sources Explored

- National Information Center on Deafness, Gallaudet University
- National Association of the Deaf
- U.S. Census Bureau
- Department of Justice
- National Center for Health Statistics
Unanswered Questions

- Proportion of the U.S. population who are unable to communicate by voice using a telephone.
- Proportion of hearing impaired population who live alone or in a household where all household members are hearing impaired.
- Proportion of the hearing impaired population that have a child 18-35 months of age.
- Proportion of hearing impaired population that use a TTY.
- Proportion of hearing impaired population that do not use a TTY, but do use a computer.
Electronic Method to Detect TTYs?

- Auto Dialers are used in the NIS to screen out non-working and disconnected numbers before the sample is released.

- No similar technical approach to detecting TTYs could be determined.
Can Interviewers Identify TTYs?

- NIS interviewers routinely code fax machine and modem lines with a distinct event code.

- Interviewers who were calling a portion of the NIS sample in a Texas Pilot Test were trained to identify and code TTY machines.
TTY Results - Texas Pilot Test

- 12,043 telephone numbers were released.
- 64 of these numbers were coded as TTYs:
  - None of these could be verified as TTYs
  - 55 were fax machines or modem lines
  - 9 were always busy or just rang without being answered
Results (continued)

- The percentage of cases coded as TTYs far exceeded the number of TTYs that had been anticipated.

- This approach was abandoned.
Our Next Step: Self Identification

• Hearing-impaired respondents are invited to contact Abt Associates using the AT&T Relay Service.
Our Next Step: Self Identification

- A revised NIS advance letter which includes a postscript on how to contact the study using a TTY machine is being tested.
  - The first letters were mailed in October 1999.
  - About 125,000 will be sent over a period of four months.
NIS Advance Letter Postscript

If you prefer to contact us using a TTY, please call the AT&T Relay Service at 1-800-682-8786 and request that 1-800-247-1970 be called.
Conclusion

• The number of households that require special assistance is unknown.
• Efforts to proactively identify sampled households requiring special assistance were not successful.
• Current efforts will measure the number of respondents who use the AT&T Relay Service.