

Researchers often use surveys to collect information from patients or the general public. In health economics, surveys are used to ask about the kind of National Health Service (NHS) people would like. Typically, these surveys have been sent by post to a random sample of people. Over time the number of people who answer postal surveys has decreased, and recently researchers have turned to the internet to collect information. Internet panel surveys are cheaper and faster than postal surveys. But using the internet may change who answers the survey, how they answer the questions, and how easy it is for them to provide accurate answers.

This research project will test if different ways of collecting survey information (internet panel survey, postal survey, postal invitation to complete an internet survey and in-person interviews) affects responses to a questionnaire asking the general population about their preferences for health care. Specifically, the study will investigate:

- if respondents to each mode are representative of the general population
- if the elicited preferences are significantly different across modes
- if statistical techniques can account for differences in respondent characteristics across modes
- if response validity varies across modes
- if research costs differ across survey modes.

The results of this research will help researchers to make decisions about how they collect information from patients or the general public.