

ARIC MANUSCRIPT PROPOSAL FORM

Manuscript #157

1. Title (length 26):

Hail Survey Response

2. Writing Group (list individual with lead responsibility first):

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3. Timeline:

Analysis and draft - Summer 1992

4. Rationale:

Few elements in the design of mail surveys have been found to influence the response rate. The potential impact of a request of non-respondents to explain their refusal to participate has not been evaluated. Intuitive thinking might suggest that such a request may prompt non-response because the option to not participate is explicitly alluded to. Counter-arguments, however, could also be made. For example, among the three alternatives -- completing the questionnaire, explaining a refusal to participate, or ignoring both appeals -- some potential non-respondents may prefer the first option. As part of the mail survey of Minnesota non-respondents to the household enumeration and the home interview (ARIC Ms. #028a), we randomized individuals either to receive or not to receive a letter requesting an explanation of their decision not to participate if they chose that option. The proposed manuscript will analyze the effect of that letter on the response rate to the mail survey.

5. Main Hypothesis:

A request to explain refusal to participate does not jeopardize the response to a mail survey.

6. Data (variables, time window, source, inclusions/exclusions):

Minnesota mail survey data (keyed in Minneapolis).