Assessing gender-differentiated impacts of COVID-19 in phone surveys

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The 14th Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Gender Statistics (IAEG-GS) Meeting
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Agenda

01. Introduction
02. Challenges in assessing gendered impacts
03. Preparing for future surveys
04. Closing
World Bank: Phone surveys to measure COVID impacts

- **Household** surveys in 100+ countries (4-8 weeks)
- **Firm** surveys in 40 countries (quarterly)

- Information on household and firm characteristics, socio-economic impacts, coping strategies and policy responses
- **Household** and **firm** surveys complement each other
- Started as early as April 2020
- Computer-Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) implementation guidelines
Household Surveys
Questionnaires and implementation guidelines are coordinated globally, but adjusted to country needs

Sampling approaches *(sampling guidelines)*

1) Based on a recent face-to-face (F2F) survey
2) Registry of phone numbers (e.g. government or phone companies)
3) Random Digit Dialing (RDD)

Sample
- Representative of national population
- 1,000 - 2,000HH per round

Gender
- Many are administered to household head
- Excludes sensitive questions (e.g. GBV)

Survey modules

- Basic Household Information
- Knowledge on COVID-19
- Behavior Changes
- Income Loss
- Safety Nets
- Access to Medicine & Education
- Employment
- Food Security
- Coping Mechanisms
- Concerns

Interview duration: 15-30 min.

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Taking stock of potential issues in assessing gender with phone surveys

Fewer women own phones than men

Differential response rates

Common to all sampling approaches

F2F surveys only collected phone numbers of household heads

Only when sampling phone numbers collected from previous F2F surveys

Potential fix: Reweighting adjustment
Underwhelming share of female respondents and overwhelming share of household heads
Challenges in assessing gendered impacts with (mainly) household heads as respondents

Household heads are more likely to be working individuals than other household members

* Some of the rapid assessments may understate the extent of COVID impacts in the population

Different characteristics of female-headed households

* e.g. higher dependency ratio, without male spouse

Reweighting adjustment based on household weights does not fix this
Preparing better for future surveys
Respondent selection influences our ability to assess gendered impacts

Collect phone numbers of ALL household members
- In first round of phone survey panel
- In future face-to-face surveys

Randomly select household member from the household roster

- If multiple numbers are available
  - Randomly select the phone number to contact from each household

- If only a single number is available
  - Passing the phone to another random household member
Collecting proxy reporting as a second-best alternative

Asking household head to report on other household members

Collect proxy reporting of ALL household members

Randomly select household member to collect proxy reporting from

CAVEAT
- Proxy reporting may work for easily observable outcomes (e.g. work participation), but not on other less visible outcomes (e.g. time-use)

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1. What innovations can avoid the pitfalls of phone surveys to get unbiased population estimates?

2. How can we—in our respective country/institution and collectively—improve representativeness of females in our remote data collection?
Extra slides—
Preliminary evidence from Vietnam
Impacts of COVID-19 likely larger for women because of childcare and service sector employment

Among married couples, mothers are more likely to stop or reduce work

Women are more likely than men to be engaged in service sector
Slightly more women stopped working. Among those who worked, women are more likely to earn less.

Among wage workers, women are less likely to receive full salary payment.

Among those in family business, women are generating lower turnovers.