



Cell Phone Sampling

Traditionally, random digit dialing (RDD) surveys were conducted using landline telephones. However, with the recent rapid growth of the use of cell or mobile phones, RDD surveys have had to adapt. According to the most recent estimates (*December 2011*), approximately 30% of U.S. households are cell-phone only – they have eliminated their traditional landline phones. In addition, another 10-20% reports receiving most or all of their calls on their cell phone even though they still have a landline. This means that **nearly half of all U.S. adults are reachable primarily by cell phone.**

Research has shown those with only cell phones tend to be younger, more diverse, more likely to be employed, and may tend to have lower income. Therefore, an RDD survey using only landlines will miss a large portion of the population and will likely introduce significant bias. For these reasons, **RDD surveys now use what is called a “dual frame” approach where both landline and cell phones are included.** The methods are similar – random telephone numbers are drawn from all possible numbers in the target geographic area, but in one case the area codes and exchanges have been assigned to traditional landline numbers; while in the other case the area codes and exchanges have been assigned to cell or mobile phones. Separate random samples are drawn from the landline and cell strata. Upon completion of data collection, the cell and landline surveys are combined and statistical weighting adjustments are done to ensure the combined sample is representative of the target population. **UCSUR uses the dual cell – landline approach for all RDD telephone surveys** unless requested by the investigator or justified for scientific reasons (*e.g., targeting only older adults with much lower cell phone usage rates*).