

## 574X8      Researching Hidden & Hard to Reach Populations

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'Hard to reach', 'rare' and/or 'hidden' populations are often of particular interest to social science researchers, yet present obvious challenges to identify and engage them in the research process. Such populations typically include individuals facing stigmatisation who are likely to be unwilling to identify themselves in public contexts.

This workshop reviews the reasons why we may want to engage such populations in research and assesses the range of methods which have been employed to access them. This includes various chain referral methods, respondent driven sampling, privileged access interviews, engaged or activist research and applications of Internet research. Although some of these applications, such as snowball sampling, are now well established, others are only widely used in health research and are still at the experimental stage in the social sciences more broadly. In addition, research with hard to reach and hidden populations often generates particular ethical concerns which will also be considered in detail.

The workshop will involve small group work to assess and apply these methods to a series of research contexts and to identify the advantages and potential drawbacks of each.

### **Indicative Readings:**

Atkinson, R. and Flint, J. (2001) 'Accessing hidden and hard-to-reach populations: Snowball research strategies' *Social Research Update* 33. Guildford, UK: University of Surrey

Benoit, C., Jansson, M., Millar, A. and Phillips, R. (2005) 'Community-academic research on hard-to-reach populations: benefits and challenges' *Qualitative Health Research* 15: 263

Johnston, L.G. and Sabin, K. (2010) 'Sampling hard-to-reach populations with respondent driven sampling' *Methodological Innovations Online* 5(2): 38-48

Matthews, J. and Cramer, E.P. (2008) 'Using technology to enhance qualitative research with hidden populations' *The Qualitative Report* 13(2): 301-315

Penrod, J., Preston, D.B., Cain, R.E. and Starks, M.T. (2003) 'A discussion of chain referral as a method of sampling hard to reach populations' *Journal of Transcultural Nursing* 14: 100

Shaghghi, A., Bhopal, R.S. and Sheikh, A. (2011) 'Approaches to Recruiting 'Hard-To-Reach' Populations into Research: A Review of the Literature' *Health Promotion Perspectives* 1(2), 86-94

Taylor, N.J. and Kearney, J. (2005) 'Reaching hard-to-reach populations: privileged access interviews and drug using parents' *Sociological Research Online* 10(2)