

Evaluation of the Distribution of Returned Mail in Orleans Parish

Tulane University Study Center

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Introduction

The Two-Tiered Hi-Low Alternative Recruitment Strategy relies on community outreach and engagement as a method to recruit women to enroll in the National Children's Study. Direct-to-consumer marketing tactics are one method to heighten awareness of the Study and encourage self-referral to the Study.

Methods

The Tulane University Study Center purchased a vendor provided mailing list as a means of listing Dwelling Units (DU) for the NCS in Orleans Parish. As part of the Two-Tiered Hi-Low Alternate Recruitment Strategy, Tulane SC employed a targeted direct mail campaign to recruit women for the Study. A series of three recruitment mail pieces were mailed to all listed DUs in eligible segments between March – May, 2011. Return service was requested on two of the mail pieces, meaning that undeliverable mail was returned to the SC. Postcards and letters were sent to nearly 43,000 DUs.

Results

Mail from approximately 10% of all listed addresses was returned to the SC as either 'undeliverable' or 'vacant'. Table 1 displays the percentage of mail return by study segment. The geographic distribution of returned mail has been analyzed as a means of identifying predictors for mailing success, and to determine whether the cause(s) of high return-rates in a given area are due to inadequacies in the mailing list, problems with postal services, residual housing problems from Hurricane Katrina, population movement, or some combination thereof.

Conclusions

The results of this evaluation will inform future listing efforts and direct mail campaigns by NCS Study Centers. Additionally, the factors that contribute to low mailing success rates may also serve as a rough indication of the availability of potential participants, and as such, might contribute to sampling practices for the NCS or future studies.

Table 1. Percentage of Mail Returns by Segment*

Segment ID	# of Dwelling Units	# Letters Returned	% Letters Returned
SSU 1	2250	400	17.6%
TSU 1	900	100	14.3%
SSU 2	3000	100	3.6%
TSU 2	1500	50	4.1%
SSU 3	2800	400	13.2%
TSU 3	1400	150	10.7%
SSU 4	900	100	8.1%
TSU 4	600	100	21.9%
SSU 5	2000	300	15.1%
TSU 5	1000	50	4.8%
SSU 6	4400	200	5.4%
TSU 6	3000	200	6.1%
SSU 7	2400	100	5.5%
TSU 7	1100	150	12.2%
SSU 8	1200	100	10.7%
TSU 8	1400	100	4.4%
SSU 9	3400	500	13.1%
TSU 9	800	50	6.9%
SSU 10	2400	200	8.7%
TSU 10	900	50	4.9%
SSU 11	1500	300	21.1%
TSU 11	600	100	22.0%
SSU 12	2300	100	4.8%
TSU 12	900	50	2.8%
Total	42650	3950	9.3%

* Each TSU has two associated SSUs. SSUs were aggregated for presentation
Rounding rules applied.