

Randomized Response Technique in a National Survey

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The randomized response technique was used in the 1973 National Survey of Family Growth to produce estimates of the number of women having abortions during a 12-month period in the conterminous United States. The model applied used two unrelated questions in separate half-samples, with a coin as the randomizing device. While the technique resulted in a higher estimate for the number of women with abortions than has previously been obtained through direct questions or reporting systems, it also yielded divergent estimates of abortion from the two half-samples. Possible causes for this divergence are discussed.

KEY WORDS: Randomized response technique; Unrelated questions model; Measurement error; Abortion.

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