

Same but different: A multi-country analysis of the I-SHARE Study's implementation methods during COVID-19 lockdown measures.

Authors:

Saltis, H.¹, Farje, F.², Kosana, P.³, Shamuts, S.^{4,5}, Gomez, R.⁶, Perotta, G.⁶, Shroeder, J.⁷, Murad, R.⁸, Hendriks, J.¹, Burns, S.¹, Michielsen, K.^{9,10}, Tucker, J.³

¹ Collaboration for Evidence, Research and Impact in Public Health, Curtin University.

² Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium

³ School of Medicine, University of North Carolina, USA.

⁴ School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa.

⁵ Research Unit, Foundation for Professional Development, Pretoria, South Africa.

⁶ Research Group Self-Regulation and Health, Institute for Health and Behaviour, Department of Behavioural and Cognitive Sciences, Faculty of Humanities, Education, and Social Sciences, University of Luxembourg - Campus Belval.

⁷ Facultad de Psicología, Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina

⁸ Asociación Probienestar de la Familia Colombiana: Bogota, Cundinamarca, CO. Institut für Sexualforschung, Sexualmedizin & Forensische Psychiatrie, Universitätsklinikum Hamburg-Eppendorf.

⁹ Academic Network for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Policy, Ghent University, Ghent, Belgium.

¹⁰ International Centre for Reproductive Health, Department of Public Health and Primary Care, University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium.

Background:

Online surveys have become more common during COVID-19. Online surveys have the advantages of being time and cost-efficient, however, also pose challenges in terms of implementation and sampling. This paper aimed to understand the unique challenges and opportunities for research, recruitment and implementation during COVID-19 to maximise the reach of future research in similar contexts.

Methods:

The International Survey of Sexual and Reproductive Health (I-SHARE) took place in a digital setting across 30 countries. Researchers utilised a mixed-methods approach, collating data from the I-SHARE master data file, along with survey responses from in-country leads involved in the I-SHARE project. The latter survey collected quantitative data, while open-ended fields were provided to discuss challenges and opportunities within the context of the pandemic. Quantitative data was managed in SPSS, and qualitative data were analysed using thematic analysis and managed using NVIVO software.

Results:

Thirty countries responded to the survey. Most of the respondents were women (66.9%, sex assigned at birth), and the mean age was 33 years. All countries implemented the I-SHARE survey online. Unpaid social media (90%), partner

organisation sharing (70%), and paid social media ads (46%) were the most common recruitment methods. Responses to the open-ended questions identified a range of challenges, successes and lessons learned about research dissemination and implementation throughout wave one of the I-SHARE study. Four themes were identified, as barriers and facilitators to recruitment, namely: the novelty of online research modalities, benefits of partnerships and collaboration, and the effects of context, equity and access.

Conclusion:

This collaborative online survey project demonstrates that online recruitment promotion was feasible in diverse settings. Further research is needed to increase the generalisability of online surveys.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

Thanks to the I-SHARE research team for assistance. Other members of the I-SHARE team are listed here <https://ishare.web.unc.edu/team-members/>.