

AAPOR

A "How To" Course on AAPOR Response Rate Calculations and Practical Examples from the Field

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Webinar Overview AAPOR

Part 1: A Brief Overview of the Basic Structure and Mechanics of Outcome Rates

1. The basic all-purpose "general population" Response Rate
2. Refusal, Cooperation, and Contact Rates
3. Response Rates when there is required screening for qualified respondents
4. A general walkthrough of outcomes and using the AAPOR calculator

Part 2: Different Strokes for Different Folks: Response Rates for Different Study Designs

1. Basic Phone (Legacy Calculator)
2. Dual Frame RDD (DFRDD)
3. Web (Including Probability Panels)
4. Mail: Named Persons
5. Mail: Unnamed Persons (ABS, etc.)
6. In-Person

Part 3: Important Considerations from Real World Situations

1. Calculating "n"
2. Hybrid samples and hybrid methodologies
3. Dealing with scrubbed samples
4. Combining multiple Response Rates

Q & A

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Credentials AAPOR

Why me?



1. Current Member of the AAPOR Standard Definitions Committee (2015 – present).
2. Principal advocate in urging AAPOR to develop and sanction a screening-study response rate
3. Chair of the SD subcommittee on new section on Mail Surveys of Unnamed Persons.
4. And, I can't count how many times I have actually had to calculate a response rate!!!

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Part 1: Overview of Response Rates



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Firstly, Resources AAPOR

The AAPOR website currently provided a number of resources:

1. "Standard Definitions: Final Dispositions of Case Codes and Outcome Rates for Surveys" 9th Edition 2016.
2. Smith, Tom (2009). A Revised Review of Methods to Estimate the Status of Cases with Unknown Eligibility.
3. The AAPOR Response Rate Calculator, Version 4.0
4. Mail Surveys of Unnamed Persons Addendum.



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The "Basic" AAPOR Response Rate AAPOR

$$RR3 = \frac{I}{(I + P) + (R + NR + O) + e(UH + UO)}$$

I = interview
 P = partial interview
 R = refusals
 NR = nonresponse
 O = other
 UH = unknown household
 UO = unknown other
 e = estimate of household eligibility

Not included: Non-working/bad/business/fax/etc.

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Lets Get Even More Basic AAPOR

There are really only 4 possible outcomes to a survey in relation to a response rate:

- The sample element resulted in a found respondent (household), and she did the interview
- The sample element resulted in a found respondent (household), and he did not do the interview
- It is inconclusive what was found with the sample element...(is there really a household/person associated with it?)
- We are sure the sample element failed in finding a respondent (household)

So Even Simpler Still...

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Lets Get Even More Basic AAPOR

Category 1: Interview
 Category 2: Eligible, non-Interview
 Category 3: Unknown if Eligible (thus, non-Interview)
 Category 4: Not Eligible

$$RR3 = \frac{\text{Cat 1}}{\text{Cat 1} + \text{Cat 2} + e(\text{Cat 3})}$$

What is e? In plain English, it is the "estimate" of Unknown if Eligible records that we assume are actually Cat 2, Eligible non-Interviews.

But how do we calculate it?

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Calculating e AAPOR

Options:

- Assume 100% eligible: RR 1 or 2
- Assume 0%: RR 5 or 6
- Use the data you gathered to calculate "proportional allocation": RR 3 or 4
- Use and advanced method (covered later)
- (Even-numbered Response Rates count partial interviews as completed interviews)

$$RR1 = \frac{I}{(I+P) + (R+NR+O) + (UH+UO)} \quad RR5 = \frac{I}{(I+P) + (R+NR+O)}$$

$$RR3 = \frac{I}{(I+P) + (R+NR+O) + e(UH+UO)} \quad e = \frac{\text{Cat 1} + \text{Cat 2}}{\text{Cat 1} + \text{Cat 2} + \text{Cat 4}}$$

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Other AAPOR Outcome Rates



Without going into great detail on the variations of each:

1. Refusal rates (Ref1 through Ref3): The proportion of all cases in which a housing unit or respondent refuses to do an interview
2. Cooperation rates (Coop1 through Coop4): The proportion of all cases interviewed of all eligible units ever contacted
3. Contact rates (Con1 through Con3): Measures the proportion of all cases in which some responsible member of the housing unit was reached by the survey

$$\text{Ref2} = \frac{R}{(I+P)+(R+NC+O) + e(UH + UO)}$$

$$\text{Coop3} = \frac{I}{(I+P)+R}$$

$$\text{Con2} = \frac{(I+P)+R+O}{(I+P)+R+O+NC + e(UH+UO)}$$

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Screening Response Rates



All Well and Good! But...but...what if we have to screen people?
 In that case, what the heck does "eligibility" mean?!

As of 2015, AAPOR now provides an official response rate for screening studies:

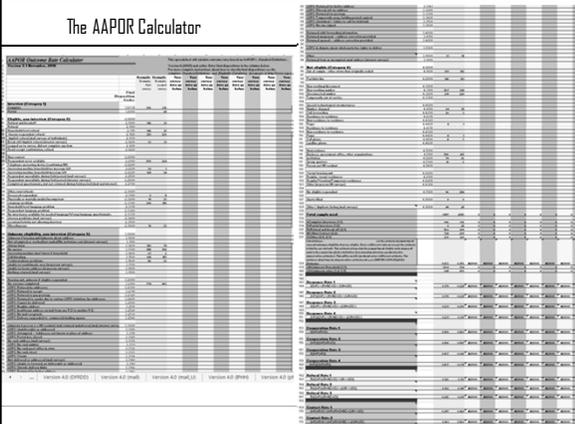
$$\text{RR3} = \frac{I}{(I + P) + (R + NR + O) + [(UH)e_1] + [(UO)e_2]}$$

Plain English:
 e1 = Whether in an **confirmed household/person** there is an **eligible respondent (Respondent Eligibility)**
 e2 = Whether there is an actual confirmed household/person at all (**Sample Record Eligibility**)

Basic calculation
 e1 = Cat 1 + Cat 2 / Cat 1 + Cat 2 + Cat 4-no-eligible-respondent
 e2 = Cat 1 + Cat 2 + Cat 3-households + Cat 4-no-eligible-respondent / Cat 1 + Cat 2 + Cat 3-households + Cat 4

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The AAPOR Calculator



The screenshot shows a complex spreadsheet-style interface with multiple columns for inputting data and calculating various AAPOR metrics. It includes sections for 'Screening Response Rates', 'Eligibility', and 'Response Rates'. The interface is detailed with many small text boxes and numerical values.

Dual Frame RDD/Screening Studies



First: recognize that interviewing on a cell phone for the general adult population is a screening study; one has to term for those under 18. As such, the cell phone side of a dual frame RDD is a screening study.

Second, note there is no cost to calculating a non-screening study with the screening study response rate: E1 will simply be 100%.

Importantly, you should NOT disposition any record as Category 2 if you were NOT ABLE to administer the screener. For example, if someone hangs up on you, they are NOT a refusal, they are "No screener completed, residential and live contact made" (a special code in Cat 3).

Note that not only do screener studies have the special response rate calculation reviewed earlier, but special refusal, contact, and cooperation rates as well.

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DFRDD/Screening



Eligible, Interview (Category 1)	LL	Cell
Complete	504	1,505
Partial	41	134
Eligible, Non-Interview (Category 2)		
Refused and breakoff	58	79
Refused	2,801	
Household level refusal		
Known respondent refusal		
Break off		
Non-eligible		
Respondent never available	3	
Telephone AM (confirming 48)		
Powering machine no message left	1,498	
Powering machine message left		
Other non-eligible		
Decreased respondent		
Physically or mentally unable	55	
Language problem	50	
Household level language problem		
Respondent language problem		
No interviewer for needed language		
Miscellaneous		
Unknown eligibility non-interview (Category 3)	LL	Cell
Unknown if housing unit		
Not attempted or worked	215	609
Wrong body	2,806	2,418
No answer		
Powering machine don't know if household		
Call blocking	51	111
Technical phone problem		
Respondent unknown if eligible respondent		
No screener completed, residential and live contact made	5,888	
No screener completed, residential and no live contact	12,816	
Other		

SUMMARY DISPOSITIONS

	LL	Cell
Completed Interviews (1.1)	504	1,505
P-Partial Interviews (1.2)	41	134
D-Refused and break off with eligible case (2.1)	2,459	79
NC-Non-contact with eligible case (2.2)	1,561	0
Other non-interview with eligible cases (2.0, 2.3)	105	9
RU-Unknown if residential (3.0, 3.1)	3,076	3,138
DU-Unknown other (3.2, 3.5) residential, unknown if eligible	0	18,764
RE-Residential, Not residential (4.0, 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9)	20,239	11,631
NR-Not eligible: Residential but ineligible for survey (4.7)	0	636
Total	27,855	35,827

ADDRESSING CASES WITH UNDETERMINED ELIGIBILITY

	LL	Cell
e1 - the full known-eligible cases assumed to have eligible R	100.0%	73.0%
e2 - the % of unknown-if-residential cases that are estimated to be residential	18.5%	64.4%

Not eligible (Category 4)

	LL	Cell
Not of sample		
Excluded list	432	43
Non-working/disconnected	18,141	8,779
Non-working number		
Disconnected number		
Temporary out of service	531	2,114
Special tech circumstances		
Number changed		
Cell phone		
Call forwarding		
Residence to residence		
Non-residence to residence		
Pager		
Non-residence		
Business	1,133	693
Redaction		
Group quarters		
Not eligible respondent	0	636
Auto filter		
Other	2	

$e1 = x / x + y$

$e2 = x / x + y$

INNR

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Web Surveys



This includes 1) Internet surveys of specifically-named persons (i.e., using list-based samples), 2) probability-based Internet panels, 3) non-probability Internet panels, also called opt-in or access panels, and 4) river samples or self-recruited online samples.

AAPOR recommends the term "participation rate" for #3 and #4 above to avoid confusion with the response rates described in the rest of this document, and given the denominator in #4 is rarely known, suggests not calculating any sort of rate at all for river samples.

A failure to receive a reply to an Internet survey would place a case in the unknown eligibility category, since it could not be confirmed that it was still currently active. That said, if it is known that the list is both accurate and current, it can be assumed that all those from whom one receives no response are eligible sample persons who therefore must be treated as nonrespondents.

An undelivered e-mail message (bounce back) is unknown if eligible unless it can be verified by other means.

Typically, web surveys use only a few codes of the response rate sheet, such as simply completes, break offs, and an unknown code.

Typically, if nonresponders all fall into Cat 3, then a large burden of the response rate falls on e. If there are no non-eligible sample records, e=100% and thus all Cat3 cases are in effect considered Cat 2.

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In-Person Surveys AAPOR

After all we have just been though, in-person surveys are fairly straightforward.

Assume that the sampling level is household, but that, like general population adult telephone surveys, we also assume that 100% of all households have someone age 18 and older.

Refusals, also like in general population telephone, can be household-level (or for establishment surveys, any level from someone in a business with "supervisory authority").

Unknown cases include situations where an interviewer is unable to gain access to the geography of a household and thus cannot confirm its status as occupied, and even situations where sample is selected but an interviewer is never sent to that sample record location.

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Important Considerations and Examples

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Calculating e AAPOR

We have reviewed RR1/2 and RR5/6, and proportional allocation. It may appear as if we have covered then, the too hot, too cold, and just right/goldilocks estimates. That said, it is typically understood that proportional representation is conservative, and in many cases downright inaccurate. Thus at times researchers might choose to calculate e by some other means. Possibilities:

1. Allocation based on disposition codes:
 - ✓ For example, assume all AMs are eligible and all NAs are not, etc.
 - ✓ More refined would be to use available information to have a specific non-0/non-100 eligibility rate for each of these dispositions.
2. Survival analysis
 - ✓ Basic Kaplan-Meier where each contact attempt is a stage in survival.
3. Getting outside data
 - ✓ Data from telephone companies on the status of unknown numbers
 - ✓ Data from databases on the status of unknown numbers
 - ✓ Data from the DSF or other databases to estimate e for ABS surveys

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Thinking Now In Terms of Outcomes



Interview (Category 1)	Code	N
Complete	1.0/1.10	806
Partial	1.2000	
Eligible, non-interview (Category 2)	2.0000	
Refusal and breakoff	2.1000	142
Refusal	2.1100	
Household-level refusal	2.1110	142
Known-respondent refusal	2.1120	251
Implicit refusal (mail surveys of individuals)	2.1130	
Break off/ Implicit refusal	2.1200	33
Logged on to survey, did not complete any item	2.1210	
Read receipt confirmation, refusal	2.1220	
Non-contact	2.2000	
Respondent never available	2.2100	570
Telephone answering device (confirming HH)	2.2200	
Answering machine household-no message left	2.2210	30
Answering machine household-message left	2.2220	125
Respondent unavailable during field period	2.2500	
Respondent unavailable during field period	2.2600	
Completed questionnaire, but not returned during field	2.2700	
Other, non-refusals	2.3000	
Deceased respondent	2.3100	0
Physically or mentally unable/incompetent	2.3200	19
Language problem	2.3300	200
Household-level language problem	2.3310	
Respondent language problem	2.3320	
No interviewer available for needed language	2.3330	
Literacy problems (mail surveys)	2.3400	
Location/Activity not allowing interview	2.3500	
Miscellaneous	2.3600	19

Total sample used	6557
I=Complete Interviews (1.1)	806
P=Partial Interviews (1.2)	0
R=Refusal and break off (2.1)	568
NC=Non Contact (2.2)	725
O=Other (2.0, 2.3)	238
e	0.533
UH=Unknown Household (3.1)	1369
UO=Unknown other (3.2-3.9)	805
Response Rate 1	
$I / (I + P) + (R + NC + O) + (UH + UO)$	0.179
Response Rate 2	
$I / ((I + P) + (R + NC + O) + (UH + UO))$	0.179
Response Rate 3	
$I / ((I + P) + (R + NC + O) + e(UH + UO))$	0.231
Response Rate 4	
$I / ((I + P) + (R + NC + O) + e(UH + UO))$	0.231

Thinking Now In Terms of Outcomes



Unknown eligibility, non-interview (Category 3)	3.0000	
Unknown if housing unit/unknown about address	3.1000	
Not attempted or worked/not mailed/No invitation sent (internet surveys)	3.1100	
Always busy	3.1200	150
No answer	3.1300	955
Answering machine-don't know if household	3.1400	27
Call blocking	3.1500	185
Technical phone problems	3.1600	52
Unable to reach/unsafe area (in-person surveys)	3.1700	
Unable to locate address (in-person surveys)	3.1800	
Nothing returned (mail surveys)	3.1900	
Housing unit, unknown if eligible respondent	3.2000	
No screener completed	3.2100	774
Other	3.9000	31
Returned from an unsampled email address (internet surveys)	3.9100	
Not eligible (Category 4)	4.0000	
Out of sample - other strata than originally coded	4.1000	189
Fax/data line	4.2000	142
Non-working/disconnect	4.3000	
Non-working number	4.3100	567
Disconnected number	4.3200	219
Temporarily out of service	4.3300	
Special technological circumstances	4.4000	
Number changed	4.4100	64
Call forwarding	4.4300	26
Residence to residence	4.4310	
Non-residence to residence	4.4320	
Pager	4.4400	4
Cell phone	4.4500	5
Landline phone	4.4600	
Nonresidence	4.5000	
Business, government office, other organizations	4.5100	596
Institution	4.5200	79
Group quarters	4.5300	10
Person not HH resident	4.5400	
No eligible respondent	4.7000	96
Quota filled	4.8000	0
Other / duplicate listing (mail surveys)	4.9000	49

Total sample used	6557
I=Complete Interviews (1.1)	806
P=Partial Interviews (1.2)	0
R=Refusal and break off (2.1)	568
NC=Non Contact (2.2)	725
O=Other (2.0, 2.3)	238
e	0.533
UH=Unknown Household (3.1)	1369
UO=Unknown other (3.2-3.9)	805
Response Rate 1	
$I/(I+P) + (R+NC+O) + (UH+UO)$	0.179
Response Rate 2	
$(I+P)/(I+P) + (R+NC+O) + (UH+UO)$	0.179
Response Rate 3	
$I/((I+P) + (R+NC+O) + e(UH+UO))$	0.231
Response Rate 4	
$(I+P)/((I+P) + (R+NC+O) + e(UH+UO))$	0.231

DFRDD/Screening



Eligible, Interview (Category 1)	LL	Cell
Complete	504	1,505
Partial	41	134
Eligible, Non-interview (Category 2)		
Refusal and breakoff	38	79
Refusal	2,401	
Household-level refusal		
Known respondent refusal		
Break off		
Non-contact		
Respondent never available	3	
Telephone AM (confirming HH)		
Answering machine-no message left	1,498	
Answering machine-message left		
Other, non-refusals		
Deceased respondent		
Physically or mentally unable	55	
Language problem	50	
Household-level language problem		
Respondent language problem		
No interviewer for needed language		
Miscellaneous		

Unknown eligibility, non-interview (Category 3)	LL	Cell
Unknown if housing unit		
Not attempted or worked		
Always busy	219	609
No answer	2,806	2,418
Answering machine-don't know if household		
Call blocking	51	111
Technical phone problems		
Residential, unknown if eligible respondent		
No screener completed, residential and live contact made		5,888
No screener completed, residential and no live contact		12,816
Other		

SUMMARY DISPOSITIONS	LL	Cell
I=Complete Interviews (1.1)	504	1,505
P=Partial Interviews (1.2)	41	134
R=Refusal and break off with eligible case (2.1)	2,439	79
NC=Non-contact with eligible case (2.2)	1,501	0
O=Other non-interview with eligible case (2.0, 2.3)	105	0
JH=Unknown if residential (3.0, 3.1)	3,076	3,138
JO=Unknown other (3.2, 3.9) (residential, unknown if eligible)	0	18,704
INNR = Ineligible: Not residential (4.0,4.1,4.2,4.3,4.4,4.5,4.8,4.9)	20,239	11,631
INR=Ineligible: Residential but ineligible for survey (4.7)	0	636
Total	27,905	35,827
ADDRESSING CASES WITH UNDETERMINED ELIGIBILITY		
e1 = the % of known-residential cases estimated to have eligible R	100.0%	73.0%
e2 = the % of unknown-if-residential cases that are estimated to be residential	18.5%	64.4%

$$e1 = x / x + y$$

$$e2 = x / x + y$$

Not eligible (Category 4)	LL	Cell
Out of sample		
Fax/data line	432	43
Non-working/disconnect	18,141	8,779
Non-working number		
Disconnected number		
Temporarily out of service	531	2,116
Special tech circumstances		
Number changed		
Cell phone		
Call forwarding		
Residence to residence		
Non-residence to residence		
Pager		
Nonresidence		
Business	1,133	693
Institution		
Group quarters		
No eligible respondent	0	636
Quota filled		
Other	2	

INNR
INR

Combining Multiple Sample Frames



The latest AAPOR Standard Definitions has guidance for DFRDD, namely:

Combined response rate =

$$[(RR_{LL} * K_{LL}) + (RR_{CP} * (1 - K_{LL}))] / 100$$

Where K is the proportion of interviews coming from that particular frame.

But there are other situations where an alternative method might be considered.

To the right: CRR = 42.2%. But the interviews are not proportionate to the number of HHs reached by frame

		List	RDD	Total
Eligible, Interview (Category 1)				
Complete	1.0/1.10	878	114	992
Eligible, non-interview (Category 2)				
Refusal and breakoff	2.100	84	24	108
Break off	2.120	36	30	66
Answering machine household	2.222	69	29	98
Physically or mentally unable	2.320	2	1	3
Language problem	2.330	5	2	7
Always busy	3.120	3	943	946
Unknown if eligible (Category 3)				
No answer	3.130	127	8441	8568
Answering machine-DKif HH	3.140	530	5828	6358
Call blocking	3.150	6	52	58
Housing unit, unknown if eligible R	3.200	414	6102	6516
No screener completed	3.210	64	268	332
Not eligible (Category 4)				
Fax/data line	4.200	96	3278	3374
Non-working number	4.310	333	47323	47656
Business	4.510	30	2979	3009
No eligible respondent	4.700	104	6038	6142
Total phone numbers used		2781	81452	84233
I=Complete Interviews (1.1)		878	114	992
P=Partial Interviews (1.2)		0	0	0
R=Refusal and break off (2.1)		120	54	174
NC=Non Contact (2.2)		76	32	108
E1 (Eligible Person)		91%	3%	17%
E2 (Eligible Household)		78%	19%	20%
Raw e1		1968	489	2457
Raw e2		2159	15248	17691
UH=Unknown household (3.1)		730	15532	16262
UO=Unknown other (3.2, 3.9)		414	6102	6516
RR3		44.6%	23.3%	33.4%