

POSTER ABSTRACTS

11th Annual HMO Research Network Conference

April 4-6, 2005 Santa Fe, NM

Health Promotion 33

Evaluating Enrollment and Retention Cash Incentives in the Web-based MENU Choices Study: What Works?

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Background: This study evaluated 24 incentive combinations to encourage self-enrollment on a web-based program that encourages consumption of fruit and vegetables.

Methods: An invitation letter, with specified conditions of enclosed or promised incentives for enrollment (\$0, \$1, \$2, \$5, promise of \$10 or \$20) and for completing a 3-month follow-up survey (\$5 or promise of \$10 or \$20), was mailed to 12,289 randomly selected subjects in a Midwestern HMO. Equal numbers of letters by race (African American vs. white and others) and gender were mailed to each incentive group. Multiple logistic regression modeling was used to test for differences by subject characteristics, letter characteristics, and incentives.

Results: Overall enrollment rates ranged from 1% to 11%, averaging 4%. Enrollment was higher with age, female gender and Caucasian race ($p < .01$). Pre-enrollment incentives of \$1, \$2 and \$5 produced higher enrollment rates, especially in men. Across all combinations, a \$20 follow-up incentive enhanced enrollment (OR 1.9, $p < .001$). Women responded more positively to stamps vs. metered mail. Men preferred simpler mailing and letter characteristics.

Conclusions: Results of this preliminary analysis suggest that incentive and mail characteristics positively impacted enrollment, but differentially by gender. Using a 'standard' HMO business envelop and including a small cash incentive is effective in recruiting participants for a self-enrollment intervention, and a promise of monetary reward is effective in retention.