

STEP 2:

Developing a Sampling Frame

When undertaking any quantitative research, it is important to obtain data from people or institutions that are as representative as possible of the group that you are studying. By doing so, you can generalise your results back to the population from which they were chosen. A probability sample is one in which each member of the population has an equal chance of being selected. This approach should result in generalisable findings.

When conducting a situation analysis of health services for rape survivors, the population is all health facilities that provide post-rape health services. You may decide to limit this to all public health facilities, or to all hospitals, or to all the health facilities in a particular area.

Since the situation analysis aims to determine the quality of management for rape survivors, there are two key components to any study: the facility itself and the health care providers who work in the facility and provide care for rape survivors.

If you want to generalise your findings to the entire country you can use a simple random sample or a stratified sample. A stratified sample may be more feasible to conduct but requires additional statistical skill in analysing data. If you choose to do a stratified sample, you will need to define your strata. In your country, you may have states, provinces or other political divisions which you can use as your first stratum in sampling. You may want to randomly sample districts within the province and then include all health facilities within the sampled districts.

STEP 3:

Deciding who to interview

Interviewing the right person will critically influence the quality of the data that you collect. It is important to identify providers who actually manage patients after rape. In order to minimise bias, you would ideally first obtain a list from the hospital superintendent (or equivalent) of all the health care providers who examine patients after rape. You can then interview all providers, or randomly sample providers from that list. In your setting, you may choose to sample only practitioners who conduct examinations, or both those who conduct the examinations and those who assist in the examinations.

The South African experience

We used provinces as our first strata because we wanted to be able to generalise our findings to the entire country and we wanted to be able to give province-specific feedback to provincial health authorities. Two districts were randomly sampled per province. The public hospitals within the district were identified. There was only one district hospital per district in South Africa. We then determined the regional and tertiary referral hospitals that the district hospital used. A tertiary hospital was not present in all provinces. We collected data on the total number of all district, regional, and tertiary hospitals in each province so that the hospitals could be weighted for analysis. We allocated a code for province and facility level.

Within each hospital, we approached the facility manager and asked for a list of doctors and / or nurses who conducted examinations of patients after rape. In some facilities, there were specific doctors and nurses while in others, any doctor rotating through casualty (the emergency room) could do an examination. Once we had a sampling frame, we sampled two doctors and two nurses who would conduct or assist in the examination of patients after rape.

We went to 31 hospitals and interviewed 124 health care providers.