INTRODUCTION TO SURVEY RESEARCH
WHAT IS A SURVEY?

- Today the word "survey" is used most often to describe a method of gathering information from only a portion of a population of interest (i.e., sample).

- Survey Research is About Asking Questions About:
  - Behaviors
  - Opinions/Attitudes
  - Beliefs
  - Symptoms
  - Attributes (Demographic Characteristics)

- Surveys can be conducted in many ways including over the telephone, by mail, email, internet or in person.
CONFIDENTIALITY

- Individual respondents should never be identified in reporting survey findings.

- All of the survey's results should be presented in summaries, such as statistical tables and charts.
WHAT A SINGLE SURVEY CAN TELL YOU

- Collects data at single point in time
- Can gather wide variety of data
- Collects data allowing calculation of prevalence or incidence rates
- Can be done when other data collection systems (e.g. clinical observation) not feasible
WHAT A SINGLE SURVEY CANNOT TELL YOU

- Cause-effect relationships
- Difficult to answer “why” questions
- Must be repeated to follow trends over time
- Sampling can be complex and is often not done well
WHEN TO USE SURVEYS

- Surveys cost money, manpower, and time

- Before beginning preparations
  - Carefully consider if survey necessary before beginning
  - Identify specific uses of survey results
  - Design survey to answer specific questions

- Rigidly follow correct sampling procedures
THE SURVEY PROCESS

- Goal-setting
- Survey design
- Data collection
- Data cleaning
- Data analysis
- Reporting survey results
GOAL-SETTING

- Vital to define research question or survey objectives
  - What exactly do I want to find out?
  - Is the hypothesis specific enough to be researchable and yet still meaningful?
  - What does the relevant literature in the field indicate about this problem?
  - Which are the independent and which are the dependent variables?
  - Are there control variables?
Example: Family Behavior and Obesity in Children

- Unhealthy eating patterns
  - Eat at restaurant
  - Types of beverages
  - Fresh fruits or vegetables in a meal

- Lack of physical activity
  - Watching TV
  - Playing video games
  - Lack of outdoor activities
**Survey Design**

- Survey design involves
  - **Choice of data collection methodology**
    - Usually face-to-face in-home or central location, telephone, mail, e-mail, WWW pop-ups, or some combination of these
  - **Questionnaire design**
    - Are valid and reliable instruments available, or must I construct my own?
  - **Sample design & analysis planning**
    - How will I choose the sample?
    - What degree of accuracy or level of confidence is tolerable?
PROBLEMS IN QUESTIONS

For each of your children, please complete the following:

Age _____  Height ____  Weight ______
Age _____  Height ____  Weight ______
Age _____  Height ____  Weight ______
Age _____  Height ____  Weight ______
PROBLEMS IN QUESTIONS

What activities do you and your family do together? Check all that apply.

____ Playing board games  ____Cooking
____ Playing video games  ____Talking
____ Watching television  ____ Reading
____ Going to the movies  ____ Playing outside
What activities do you and your family do together? Check all that apply.

- Playing board games
- Playing video games
- Watching television
- Going to the movies
- Cooking
- Talking
- Reading
- Playing outside
PROBLEMS IN QUESTIONS

Which of the following beverages does your family drink regularly? Check all that apply

_____ Water
_____ Milk
_____ Fruit Juice
_____ Kool-Aid
_____ Regular Pop
_____ Diet Pop
_____ Other________________________