

LISS panel statistics 2010

1.1 Participation and attrition from 2008 to 2010

Table 1 shows the number of households registered as panel members and the number of persons in these households who participated in the LISS panel in February 2008, 2009 and 2010.

The second row of the table shows the total number of persons eligible for individual questionnaires, where eligible is defined as aged 16 or older and capable of filling in the questionnaires. All households in which at least one eligible person participates are included in the panel. The last line of the table shows the number of eligible persons who are willing to answer questionnaires¹.

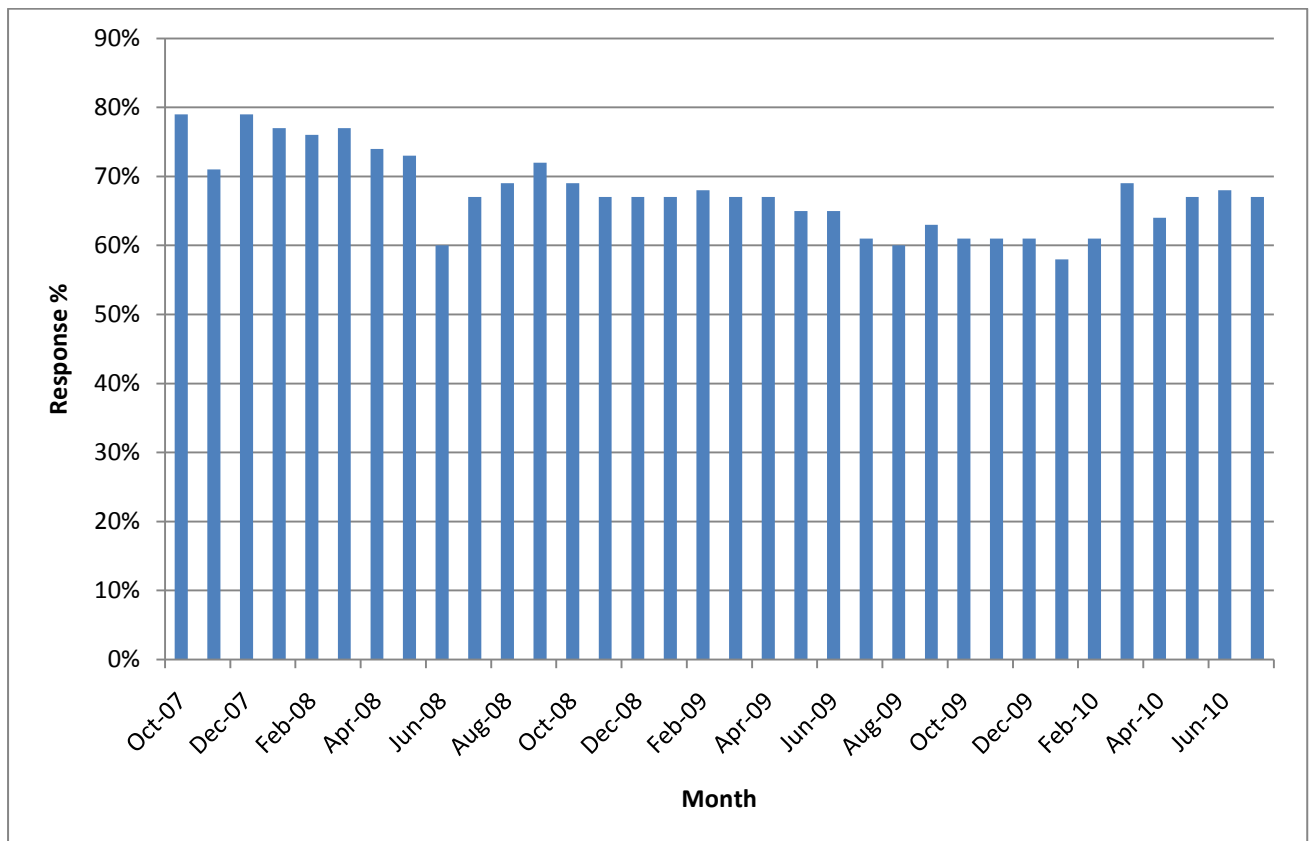
Table 1. Participating households and panel members in 2008, 2009 and 2010

	February 2008	February 2009	February 2010
	N	N	N
Household registered as panel member	5209	4863	5600
Eligible persons in households	10027	9501	10673
Persons willing to participate	8026	7773	8735

Figure 1 shows the average monthly participation rates from the start of the panel in October 2007 until July 2010. The bars represent the panel members who completed at least one individual questionnaire that month, as a percentage of panel members selected for at least one questionnaire. The monthly response varies between 58% and 79% and has decreased until February 2010. From March 2010 onwards it has slightly increased again, as a result of the sleepers study described in Section 1.3.

¹ The contact person of the household indicates, in the household questionnaire, which household members are willing to participate. Not all household members who are in this way registered as willing participants do actually start answering questionnaires. In Figure 1, we include only those willing participants who have completed at least one individual questionnaire.

Figure 1. Participation rates per month



Between the start of the panel in October 2007 and the end of January 2010,² about 18% of the households (16% of the individual panel members) that ever participated left the panel. De Vos (2009a) described which specific demographic groups had especially high or low attrition rates ([De Vos, 2009](#)).

1.2 Effect of the stratified refreshment sample of 2009

A study of the representativeness of the LISS panel in the first year after its recruitment ([Knoef and De Vos, 2008](#)) showed that some special groups, for example elderly women and non-Western first generation immigrants, were initially somewhat underrepresented in the LISS panel. In order to correct for these biases, a stratified refreshment sample was drawn in 2009. In cooperation with Statistics Netherlands, we oversampled the groups which had a below-average response in the main recruitment: elderly, single-person households and people with a non-Western ethnic background. The recruitment procedures were also tailored to these groups to increase the response rates.

² The attrition rate until end of January 2010 includes only panel members who spontaneously indicated they wanted to stop. From January 2010 onwards, panel members were also dropped from the panel when, after repeated telephone contact efforts, they still did not participate in the monthly surveys.

Table 2 shows the development in panel composition with respect to age, household composition and ethnicity at three time points: April 2008 (start of the panel), April 2009 (before the refreshment), and April 2010 (after the refreshment). In addition, the composition of the Dutch population of 2008 on the same variables is shown. The table indicates that the addition of the refreshment sample (numbers taken from Tables 1, 2 and 8 of [De Vos, 2010](#)) considerably improved the representativeness of the LISS panel with respect to age, household composition and ethnicity.

Table 2. Correction of bias by recruitment of the stratified refreshment sample in 2009

	Panel April 2008	Panel April 2009	Panel April 2010	Statistics Netherlands 2008
	%	%	%	%
Age 65 or older ¹	8.6	9.3	11.3	14.1
Living alone ¹	23.7	24.2	27.9	35.5
Non-western background ²	4.5	4.8	5.9	9.5

¹ All household members

² Participating panel members aged 16 or older

1.3 Re-activating panel members and preventing inactivity

In the LISS panel we classify respondents as “sleepers” when they are registered as panel members but have not completed any questionnaires for at least three consecutive months. In January 2010, around 30% of the total number of panel members recruited in 2007 was asleep.

In order to identify strategies that might be used to keep the panel members 'awake' and motivated, we conducted the so-called sleeper study in the first half of 2010. In this study the inactive panel members were contacted by telephone for a brief questionnaire.

This questionnaire included the following sub-questions:

- reasons why the sleepers signed up for the panel to begin with;
- reasons why the sleepers do not respond or respond insufficiently to the questionnaires;
- how the sleepers can be persuaded to once again participate in completing questionnaires.

All sleepers received a letter in February 2010 announcing that they would be contacted by an interviewer to ask them a few questions. Soon afterwards they received

a phone call or a visit³ from a TNS NIPO interviewer on behalf of the LISS panel. The results are shown in table 3. A total of 2,454 sleepers in the LISS panel were approached, 63% of them (1,536) were contacted and 59% (1,447) answered the entire interview or at least one of the core questions of the interview. The sleepers were randomly assigned to different experimental conditions with varied incentive offers. Depending on the experimental condition, between 28% and 50% (average 41%) of those interviewed participated on at least one occasion after the interview. With regard to long term participation, 25% of the interviewed sleepers continued to participate for three months or longer after the interview. This percentage also varied across experimental incentive conditions, from 19% to 31%. The experiment showed that the most efficient method to reactivate sleepers is to promise them a 10 euro incentive conditional on renewed participation on at least one occasion.

Table 3. Results of the sleeper study of 2010.

	N	%
Sleepers in February 2010	2,454	
Contacted	1,536	63% of sleepers
Interviewed	1,447	59% of sleepers
Re-activated 1 or more months	589	41% of interviewed
Re-activated > 3 months	355	25% of interviewed
Stopped	1379	56% of sleepers

The sleeper study was not only meant to obtain information and to re-activate panel members, it also served as a means to clean up the panel. The long-term inactive panel members had until this study, always been included in the monthly questionnaire statistics and thus depressed the response rates. Sleepers who refused to telephone interview or told the interviewer they would not resume participation were removed from the panel after this sleeper study. In addition, interviewed sleepers who promised to restart again but did not, even after one more reminder, some months after the study, were also removed. The effect of both the reactivation of sleepers and of the removal of persistent sleepers is visible from the slight increase in response percentages from March 2010 (figure 1).

The results of the sleeper study have been implemented by the LISS panel management. Panel members who have not participated for two consecutive months are contacted with a brief personal call. The panel management can then take action flexibly

³ The majority of the LISS panel sleepers were approached and interviewed by telephone. A small group of 112 sleepers for whom no phone numbers were available were visited at home by an interviewer.

if there are technical problems, or make a note in the system that someone is temporarily unable to participate for personal reasons. Persistent inactivity then initiates a flow of steps starting in the third month so that contact can be maintained at all times and the conditional 10 euro extra can be offered.