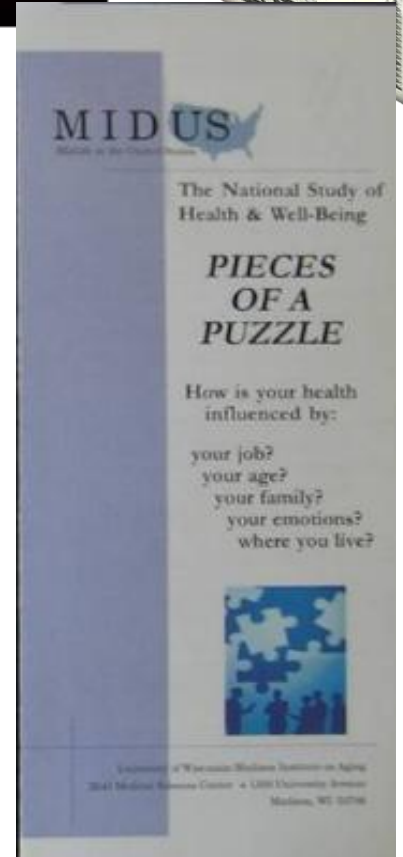


Incentives



Presentations and Discussion: Incentives Part 1

Incentives and Research-Based Best Practices

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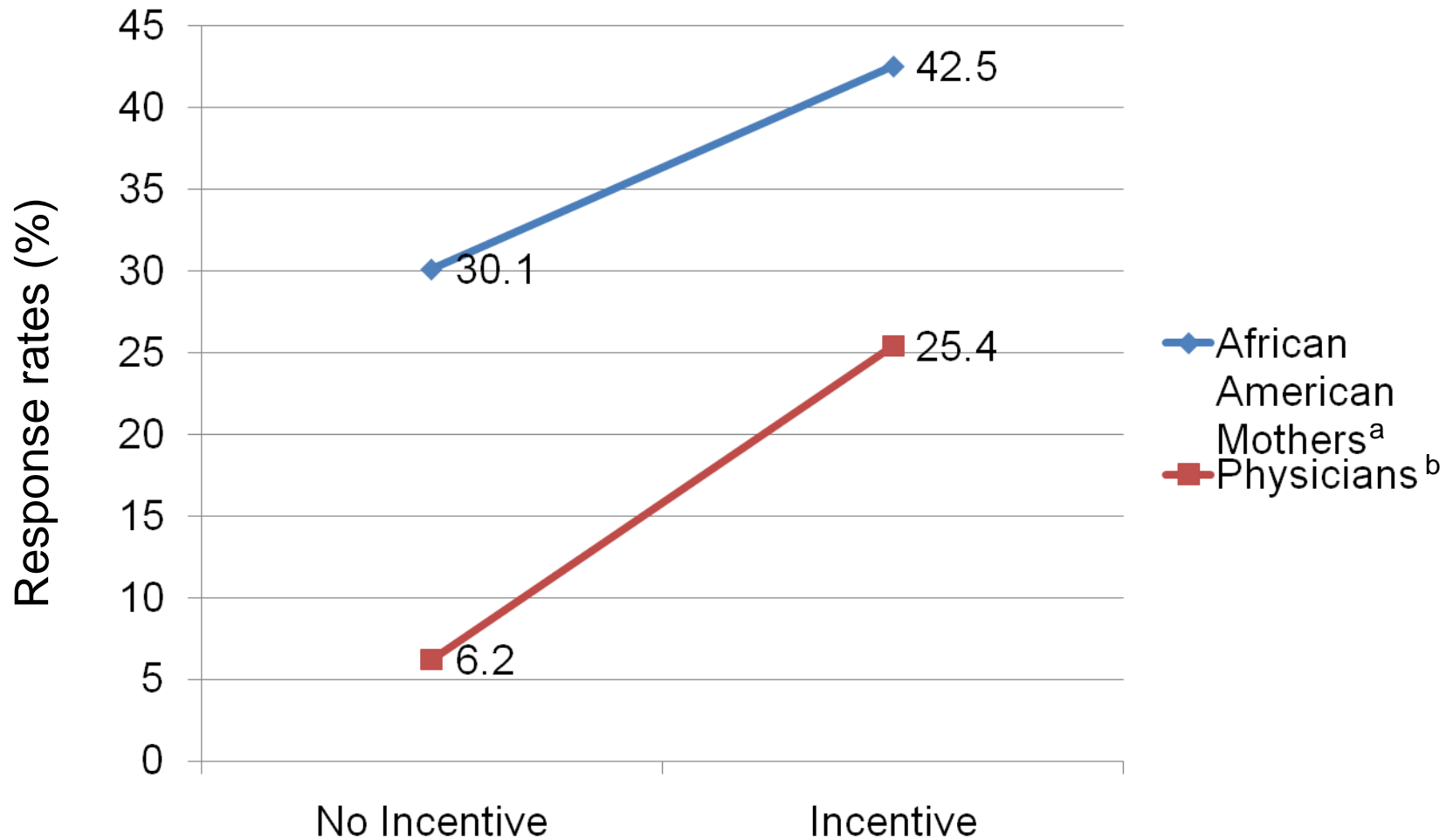
Overview

- Preliminaries
- Why we use incentives: Intended effects →
- How incentives work →
- Key factors when considering an incentive's impact →
 - Timing, mode, type, amount, population
- Effects of incentives by mode →
- Why we use incentives: Other effects →
- Case study →
- Concluding comments →

Why we use incentives: Intended effects (see Singer 2002)

- To increase participation (get higher response rates)
 - In cross-sectional studies →
 - Across waves in longitudinal studies
 - For ancillary data collection efforts
 - To convert refusals
 - Because journals/funders require a certain response rate, clients may too

Results from 2 experiments recently conducted at UWSC



^aDykema, Stevenson, Kniss et al. 2011; ^bDykema, Stevenson, Day et al. 2011



Word of caution about response rates



Why we use incentives (see Singer 2002)

- Care about the response rate because we hope it tells us something about how representative of the population our sample of responders is
- Response rate \neq nonresponse bias
- Function of the response rate and the amount those not surveyed differ from those who do
 - Bias may be large, even with a high response rate, if those interviewed differ substantially from those who refuse or are not located
 - Bias may be small, even with a low response rate, if respondents are similar to refusers and noncontacts on the characteristics of interest
- May be difficult to help clients understand this!



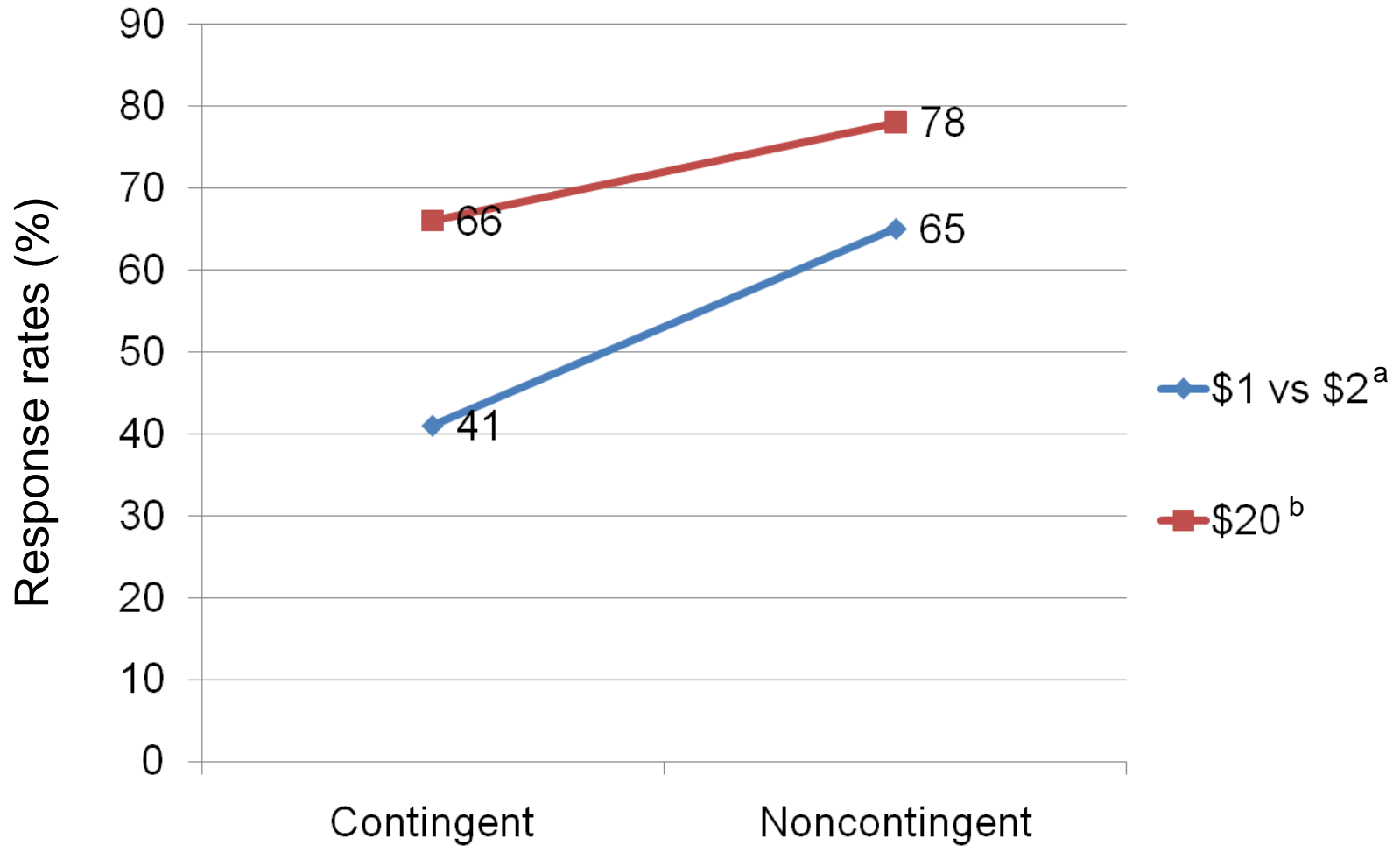
How incentives work

- Know more about **who** participates than **why** they do
 - Reasons (Porst and von Briel 1995 cited in Singer 2002)
 - Altruism, survey-related, personal
- Some theoretical perspectives
 - Social exchange theory (Dillman 1978, 2007)
 - Rewards, costs, trust
 - Norm of reciprocity (Gouldner 1960)
 - Economic exchange (Biner and Kidd 1994)
 - Leverage-salience theory (Groves, Singer, Corning 2000)
 - Participation is determined by a number of factors (survey, person, environment) that are weighted differently and work to push or pull the person
 - Need a variety of techniques to increase participation

Key factors when considering an incentive's impact: Timing

- Contingent (promised) versus noncontingent (prepaid)
 - Contingent incentives are provided upon completion of the task
 - e.g., \$57 check offered in exchange for completing a 2 hour interview
 - Noncontingent incentives are provided in advance of the task
 - e.g., \$2 bill in a mail survey offered as a “small token of appreciation”
- Noncontingent incentives are (usually) much more effective →

Contingent vs noncontingent incentives: Results from 2 mail surveys



^aPaolillo & Lorenzi 1984; ^bBerry & Kanouse 1987



Key factors when considering an incentive's impact: Mode

- Mail, web, telephone, FTF, mixed
 - Initial contact, invitation, administration
- Mode creates specific opportunities and constraints
- Mail
 - e.g., easy to include incentives with questionnaire but first respondents must open the envelope
- Web
 - e.g., implementing a email-web design, hard to deliver an incentive on the spot
- Interviewer-administered (phone or FTF) (Lavrakas 2011)
 - e.g., can deliver in advance if have a matched address; training INTs to leverage incentives
 - e.g., safety of INTs carrying cash; if contingent, how visible

Key factors when considering an incentive's impact

- Type →
- Amount or value
 - Findings are not straightforward practically
 - Any is almost always better than none
 - Overall, more is better
 - Doesn't mean X amount will be greater than X+more
 - While increasing amounts may increase response rates, at some point get diminishing returns
- Population/characteristics of sample members
 - Professional populations
 - Intrinsic interest in the topic
 - Social importance of the study
 - Relationship of sample member to sponsor

Types of incentives

- Monetary
 - Cash (“cash is king”; “more bills is better”)
 - Checks or money orders (logistics; \$5; cost effectiveness)
 - Depositing \$ into an account
- Quasi-monetary
 - Gift cards/gift certificates
 - Issued by specific retailers
 - Issued by a bank
 - Coupons
- Nonmonetary
 - Gifts – pens, calendars, stress balls, magnets
 - Brochures, FAQs
 - Resource lists
 - Study results
 - Donations to charity



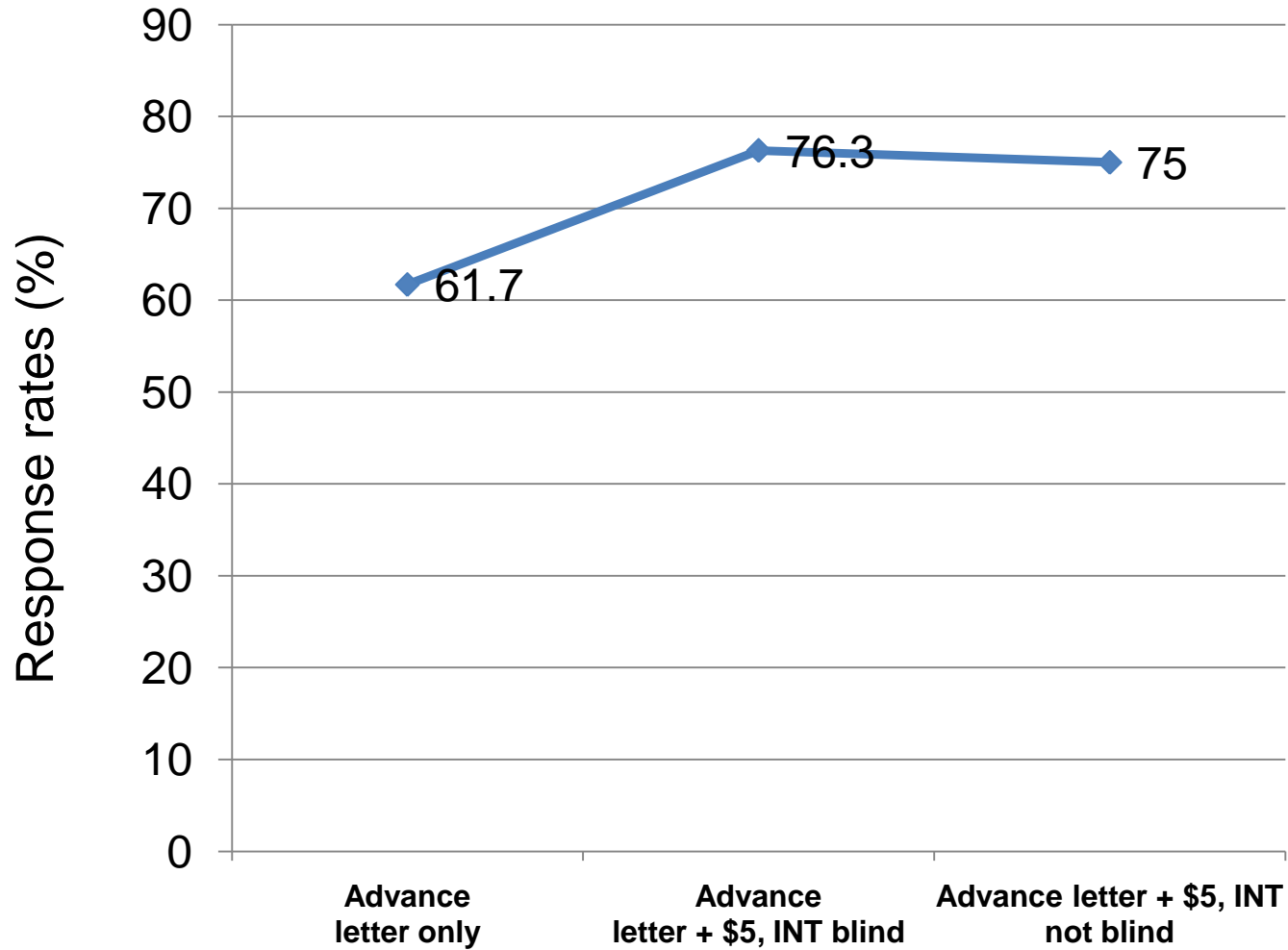
Effects of incentives by mode: Mail

- Summary of the use and effect of incentives on response rates by mode
- Singer (2011): new meta-analyses are consistent
- Mail
 - Meta-analyses: Church 1993; Edwards et al. 2002
 - Noncontingent monetary yielded average increase in response rates of 19.1 percentage points (Church)
 - Noncontingent yield higher response rates than contingent
 - Noncontingent monetary yield higher response rates than nonmonetary
 - Response rates increase as value of the incentive increases

Effects of incentives by mode: Telephone and FTF

- Meta-analysis: Singer et al. 1999
 - Improve response rates but have less of an effect than for mail
 - Contingent incentives are not significantly different from noncontingent incentives
 - But several studies favor prepaid
 - Money works better than gifts
 - Response rates increase as value of the incentive increases
- Effects on interviewers (Singer, Van Hoewyk & Maher 2000)

Singer, Van Hoewyk & Maher 2000



Effects of incentives by mode: Web

- Cook et al. 2000
 - Early meta-analysis
 - Incentives were associated with lower response rates
 - Speculated relationship may be due to incentives being offered for long and difficult surveys
- Goritz 2006
 - Meta-analysis includes email invite & web complete
 - Incentives are effective overall
 - Average increase in response rates of 4.2%
 - Less effective than with other modes
 - None of the moderator variables were significant
- Rapidly changing area!



Why we use incentives: Other effects (see Singer 2002)

- Costs
 - Are incentives cost effective? ... Often
 - Lavrakas (2011): Total cost of using incentives
 - $(\$incentive + \$infrastructure + \$delivery) - (\$sample\ reduction + \$reduced\ contacts + \$reduced\ field\ period + \$reduced\ use\ of\ interviewers + \$reduction\ in\ other\ costs)$
 - Probably most effective when they are prepaid
 - Much more on cost-related issues in the next session!

Why we use incentives: Other effects (see Singer 2002)

- Item nonresponse (missing data)
 - Do incentives lower levels of missing data?
 - Evidence is mixed
 - May be confounded with way incentive is used
 - Prepaid incentives versus for refusal conversion
 - Overall positive effects are small but we don't "design" for this

Why we use incentives: Other effects (see Singer 2002)

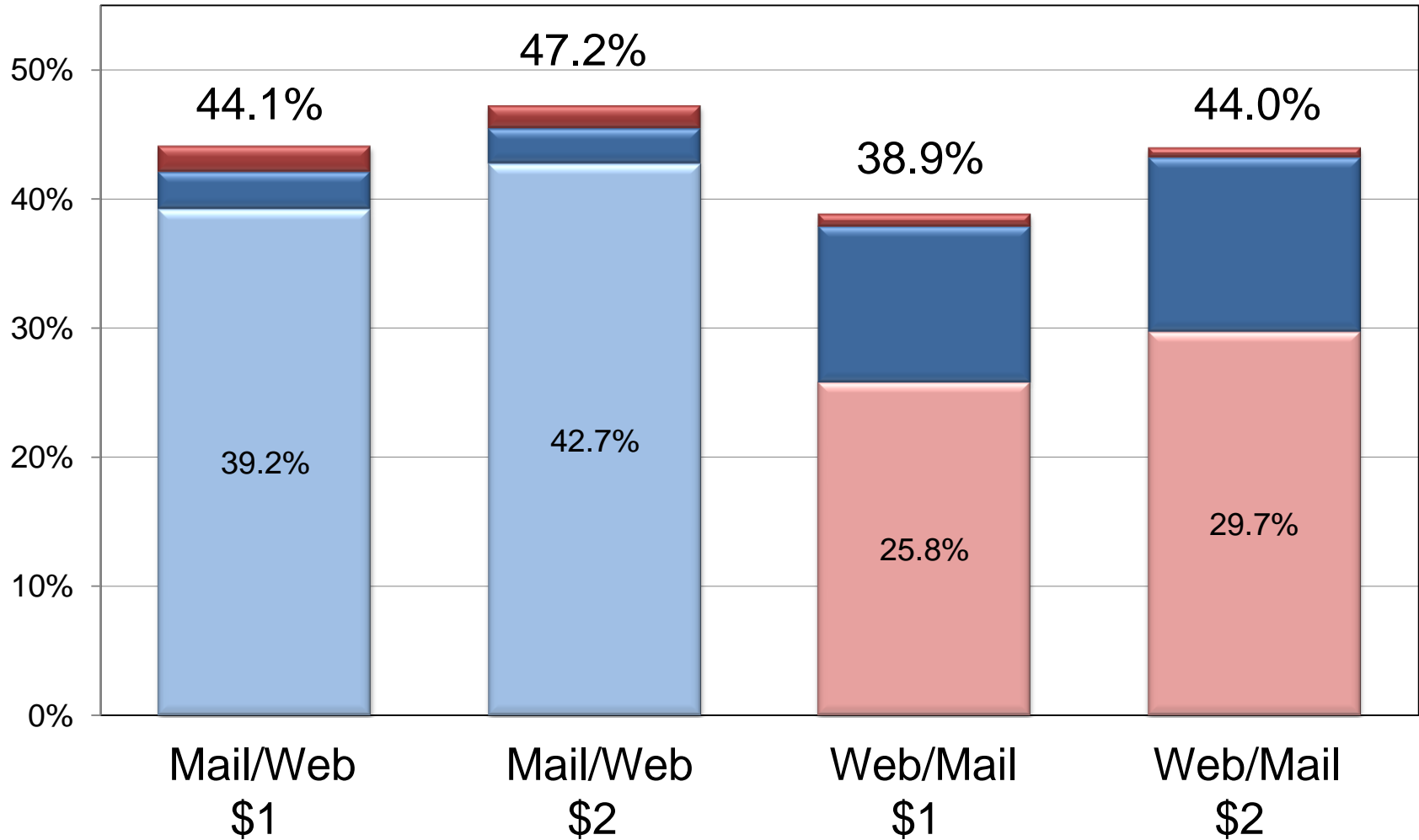
- Survey responses : Do incentives affect what they tell us?
 - Not a lot of studies and often contradictory
- Effect of the incentive itself
 - “Pen” experiment (Bischooping & Schuman 1992)
 - If you are using a nonmonetary incentive, think about its potential implications
- Carryover incentive effects on mood
 - Some evidence that Rs in the SCA who receive incentives provided more optimistic responses
- “Incentives might influence response distributions (if) they bring into the sample people whose characteristics differ from those who would otherwise be included, and their answers differ because of differing characteristics.” (Singer)
 - Change in the composition of the sample

Why we use incentives (see Singer 2002)

- Sample composition
 - Are incentives more effective for some groups than others?
 - Studies show that incentives may increase participation among traditionally underrepresented groups like minority and lower-educated Rs
 - Incentives may increase participation among those less interested in the study's topic



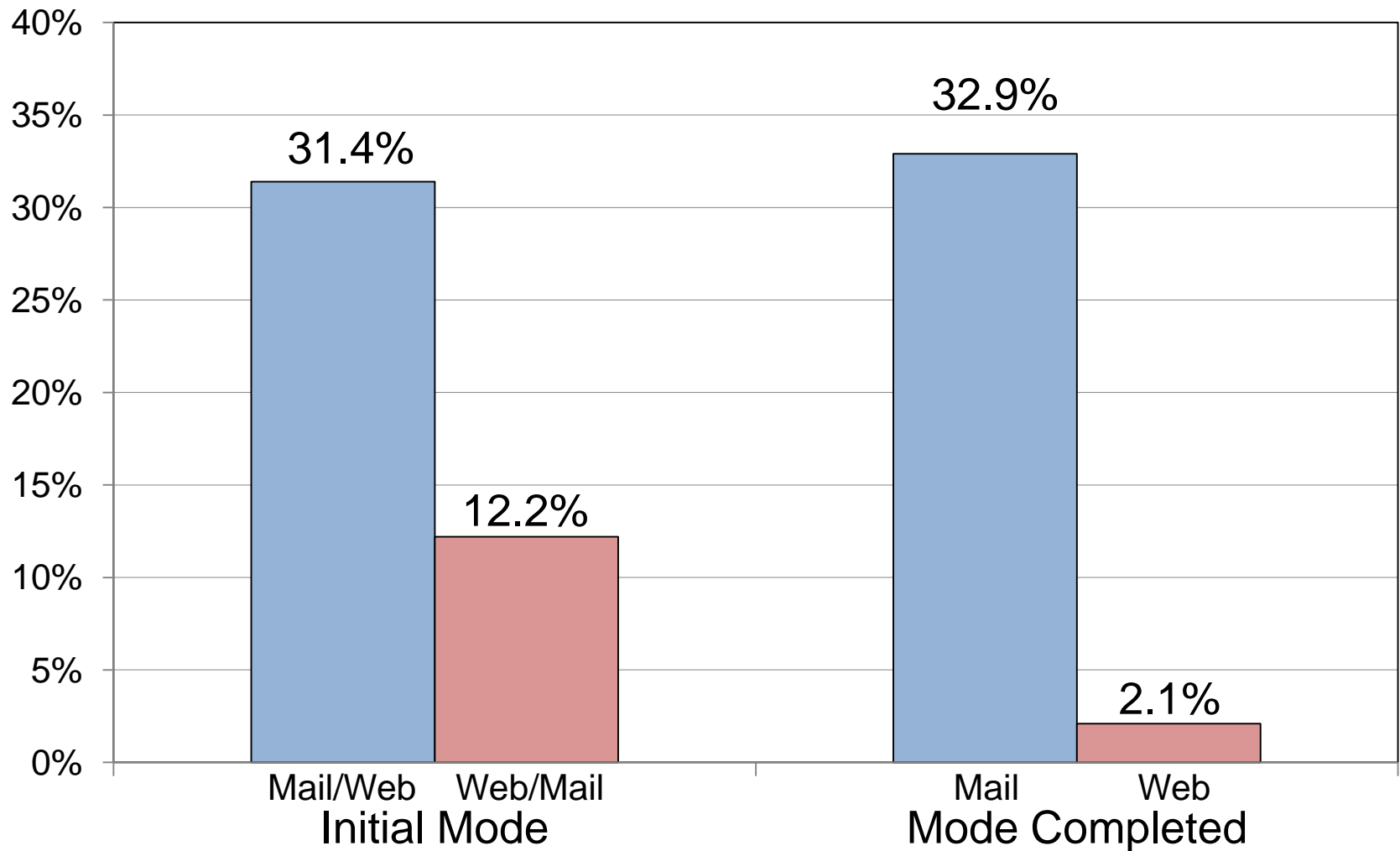
Case Study: Response rates with both modes: Mail/web vs web/mail (Stevenson et al. 2011)



Case Study: Costs per complete with dual mode: Mail/Web vs. Web/Mail (Stevenson et al. 2011)

	Mail/Web \$1	Mail/Web \$2	Web/Mail \$1	Web/Mail \$2
Cost				
Total Variable Costs	\$12,071	\$13,748	\$9,563	\$11,248
Cost Per Complete	\$17.99	\$19.10	\$16.35	\$16.69
	+\$1.11		+\$0.34	
Response Rates	44.1%	47.2%	38.9%	44.0%
	+3.1%		+5.1%	
Total Number of Completes	671	720	577	674

Case Study: Percent of cases with any missing data (Stevenson et al. 2011)



Concluding comments

- Prepaid incentives are particularly effective
- Need more theoretically driven studies especially with regard to examining
 - Nonresponse bias and not just response rates
 - Other indicators of data quality
 - Need to design studies to look for these in addition to examining them in an ad hoc fashion
 - Determining “how large” the incentive should be
- Even if you knew all there was to know, advising clients when thinking through all the trade-offs can be complicated
- Likely to see many more studies on using incentives in the coming years!

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Thank You!

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