IDEAL

Impact Data and Evidence Aggregation Library

Intervention details

Eva Vivalt

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INTRODUCTION

IDEAL aims to standardize results, effect sizes, and contextual information to make it easier to work with evidence.

Capturing the details of the intervention are key for researchers and policymakers who want to understand if– and how–similar interventions work

Agenda

1. Intervention details concepts

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Implementation details concepts

Understanding key details of an intervention

Target population

The **target population** of an intervention is the specific group of units that are the goal of an intervention

- Implementers/governments/researchers might have different target populations for the same intervention
- Target populations might be different from the unit of analysis
- Eligibility requirements for a study (or intervention) might be more narrow than the target population

Example target population

- Suppose you are evaluating a labeled cash transfer, where households are told it is labeled for primary school fees
- The target population is primary-school-aged children
- The unit of analysis might be the household (or village, if the design is clustered at that level)
- Your funding organization might require you to work in the poorest 40% of villages, which means there are some members of your target population (primary-school-aged children in the top 60% of villages) that are excluded from the stuy

Eligibility

Eligibility criterion determine which units **can** receive an intervention

E.g., age, household income, gender

- Not all interventions (studies) have eligibility criteria
- Eligibility criterion *may* be different from sample inclusion/exclusion rules

Scale

Scale is one method for determining the *size* of an intervention

- Scale is typically measured by the number of units an intervention is delivered to
- Note that sometimes, **units who are not part of the study receive the intervention**
    - In this case, the intervention scale is larger than the study scale

Intervention scale

The **intervention** scale is the number of units who received an intervention, regardless of if they were in the study or not

Authors may present this as:

- Number of units (e.g., households), or
- Geographic regions covered by intervention

Intervention scale will only differ from study scale when the study includes only some portion of units who receive the intervention

Study scale

The **study** scale is the number of units who received an intervention **in the study**

Authors typically present this as the number of units (e.g., households) that received the intervention

Implementation Fidelity

Interventions often have many different components, or take place over multiple sessions

Fidelity describes **how faithfully** interventions are implemented in relationship to the intervention protocol

Implementation Fidelity

For example, suppose your intervention is an after school tutoring session, held twice per week for 15 weeks at a duration of 90 minutes per session

Any deviation from the above protocol constitutes a lack of fidelity to the intervention protocol, such as:

- Tutor was ill and couldn’t hold sessions for 2 weeks
- The school lost power and couldn’t hold one session
- Some tutors shortened the sessions to 45 minutes

Implementation Fidelity

Fidelity **does not describe** deviations from the **randomization** protocol (e.g., when units assigned to control receive the intervention or vice versa - that's compliance)

However, capturing the fidelity of an intervention might help explain the absence of treatment effects, especially in cases when fidelity was low

Take-up

Take-up is a measure of how many units in a study arm participated in an intervention

Recall that arms are assigned to either receive an intervention(s); or receive nothing

Both types of arms may choose to take up interventions or not

Take-up

Ideally, take-up will be high in arms assigned receive an intervention, and low in arms assigned to control

Take-up may also explain the absence of treatment effects, especially in cases where take-up is *low* in intervention arms and/or high in control arms

Thank you for listening

Eva Vivalt
eva.vivalt@utoronto.ca

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