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## Differences in survey methodology of two Advance Care Planning survey polls conducted in Alberta, Canada


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## Background

- A number of telephone polls have been conducted in Alberta from 2007 to 2015 to assess ACP uptake at the population level
- In 2015, two independently conducted polls yielded significant differences in ACP engagement!



CANADA

Alberta, Canada:  
population ~ 4 million

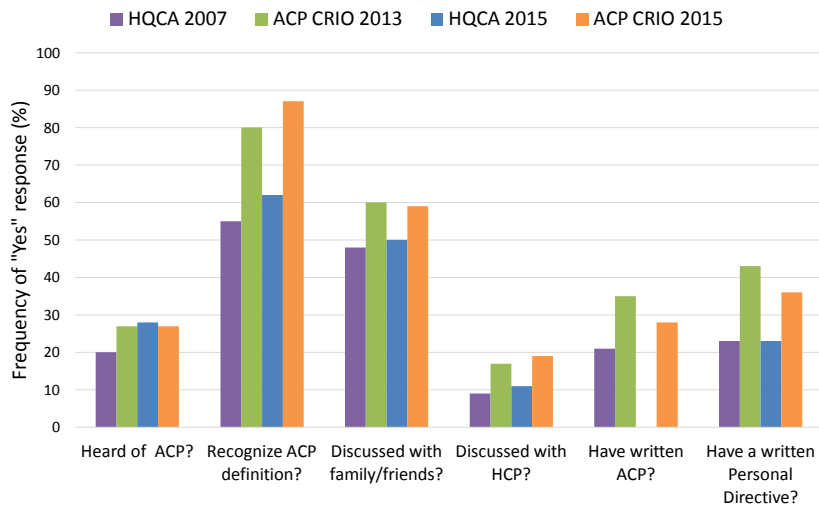
**Objective:** To understand factors underlying discrepancies between two independently conducted telephone polls assessing ACP engagement in the same population and timeframe

- Two polls conducted in 2015:
  - Health Quality Council of Alberta (HQCA)
    - provincial government-funded, quality assurance body
    - poll conducted by the Population Research Laboratory at the University of Alberta
    - ACP questions asked as part of an annual population survey on patient experience with healthcare services
  - ACP CRIO research program
    - poll conducted by the Lethbridge College Citizen Society Research Lab
    - ACP questions asked as part of a larger omnibus public opinion survey on a variety of issues
- Same questions asked in both polls

## Survey Questions

1. Have you ever heard of advance care planning?
2. Advance care plans are verbal or written instructions that make your wishes known about the kind of health care you want, or do not want, if you become very ill or injured and are unable to speak for yourself. These are sometimes also called "living wills." Based on this definition have you heard of advance care planning?
3. Have you had a discussion with family or a close friend about what health care treatment you want, or do not want, if you become very ill or injured and you cannot speak for yourself?
4. Have you ever had a discussion with a health care professional (e.g. Doctor, nurse, social worker, or other healthcare team member) about what health care treatment you want or do not want if you become very ill or injured and you cannot speak for yourself?
5. Do you have an Advance Care Plan written down in any form or format?
6. Now we are going to ask you a question about Personal Directives. Personal Directives are the legal documents in Alberta which allow you to name a decision maker and provide written instructions to guide your medical care, if due to illness or injury, you no longer have the capacity to make such decisions. Do you have a written Personal Directive?

## Poll results Alberta 2007, 2013, 2015



- To account for the complex survey design, survey methods were used to analyze the data
- Survey procedures available in SAS were used
  - SUREVEYFREQ
  - SURVEYLOGISTIC
- We compared the following between the two 2015 surveys:
  - Demographics
    - Age, gender, health rating, education and income
  - Sampling techniques
  - Survey structure

	HQCA 2015	ACP CRIO 2015
<b>Respondents</b>	1471	961
<b>Response rate*</b>	35%	26%
<b>Income*</b>		
<\$30,000	130 (9.8)	92 (11.7)
\$30,000-\$60,000	251 (19.2)	182 (23.7)
\$60,000-\$100,000	359 (27.5)	181 (23.2)
>\$100,000	560 (43.5)	314 (41.4)

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

	HQCA 2015	ACP CRIO 2015
<b>Age category*</b>		
18-44 years	738 (52.5)	280 (31.1)
45-64 years	504 (32.9)	388 (41.3)
65+ years	229 (14.6)	252 (27.6)
<b>Education*</b>		
High school or less	390 (27.4)	165 (17.5)
Some post-secondary	199 (13.7)	205 (21.8)
College/Tech Trade	415 (28.3)	259 (27.3)
University	456 (30.7)	309 (33.3)

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

	HQCA 2015	ACP CRIO 2015
<b>Health Rating*</b>		
0-20	18 (1.2)	45 (4.8)
20-40	41 (2.7)	19 (2.1)
40-60	148 (9.8)	82 (8.4)
60-80	610 (41.1)	328 (34.5)
80-100	654 (45.2)	486 (50.3)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	727 (50.7)	401 (50.3)
Female	744 (49.3)	559 (49.7)

\*Significant at  $p < 0.05$

## Potential factors contributing to poll discrepancies

- Sampling methods
  - Random digit dialing (HQCA) vs. drawing from a commercial polling directory (ACP CRIO)
- Survey preamble
  - ACP CRIO poll: Lethbridge College students conducting “a public opinion study as part of a class”
  - HQCA poll: Population Research Laboratory member calling on behalf of HQCA to conduct “a confidential survey about satisfaction with health care services in Alberta... to improve the quality, safety and performance of Alberta's health care system”
- Survey structure
  - ACP CRIO survey – ACP questions **at beginning** of ~6-7 min survey
  - HQCA survey – ACP questions **at end** of ~30-min survey

## Conclusion

- There are differences between the two surveys conducted on the same population in the same year
  - Differences were mostly with respect to age, education, health rating and income
  - Surveys conducted with different objectives could be the possible reason for differences
  - Differences in representation of the Zones: HQCA had about 33% from each of the three zones while for CRIO it ranged from 23% to 29%



**Thank you!**

**Questions/comments?**

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