

# EFFECTS OF DATA COLLECTION METHODS ON ESTIMATED HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION AND POVERTY, AND ON SURVEY COSTS: EVIDENCE FROM AN EXPERIMENT IN THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

Discussion

IARIW conference



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## Lots to like about this paper

- Convinced NSO to experiment with different collection methods
- Provides convincing evidence to substantiate growing call to move from diary to recall
  - Average consumption and poverty are generally similar for recall, PAPI diary, and CAPI diary
  - Except low-monitored PAPI diary gives substantially lower consumption / higher poverty estimates
- I'm sympathetic to overall argument that countries should move from diary to recall

# Comments

- Is there strong evidence that diary-keeping surveys give data of worse quality than the status quo?
  - Highly monitored diaries appear to give similar results to recall
  - Status quo in the pacific is “somewhere between low and high-monitored diaries”
  - Diary fatigue could be balanced out by other benefits of (highly monitored) diaries such as more disaggregated information
- Strong argument that recall is a better option anyway
  - Because gives similar results at much lower cost

# Comments

- Could tablets for a diary be provided directly to households?
  - Interviewer transcription costs are a key cost of CAPI diaries
  - Tablets are cheap (~\$35 at Walmart), small share of even cost of recall surveys (\$290 per household urban, \$580 rural)
  - Would this make diaries much cheaper than status quo PAPI or experimental CAPI by eliminating data entry costs?
  - Could tablet be made an incentive to keep up the diary?

# Comments

- How robust are profiles to different methods of welfare data collection?
  - Are discrepancies between methods higher for different types of households?
- Can alternative welfare indicators be used to informally assess quality of different methods?
  - Presence of kids in school? Labor market outcomes? Share of food consumption? Asset ownership or purchase?

# Minor comments

- **Choice of poverty line**
  - How much does choice of method affect extreme poverty rates?
  - Maybe try \$1.00 + half of median to be consistent with WB societal poverty line?
  - Would national poverty rate differ across methods if national poverty line was re-estimated?
- **Details**
  - How many EAs in experiment?
  - Were standard errors clustered on EA?

# Where to go from here?

- What can NSO do to facilitate move from diary to recall?
  - What can be learned from experience of other countries who have made the switch?
- Can these experimental results be used to back out trends in the event of a switch?