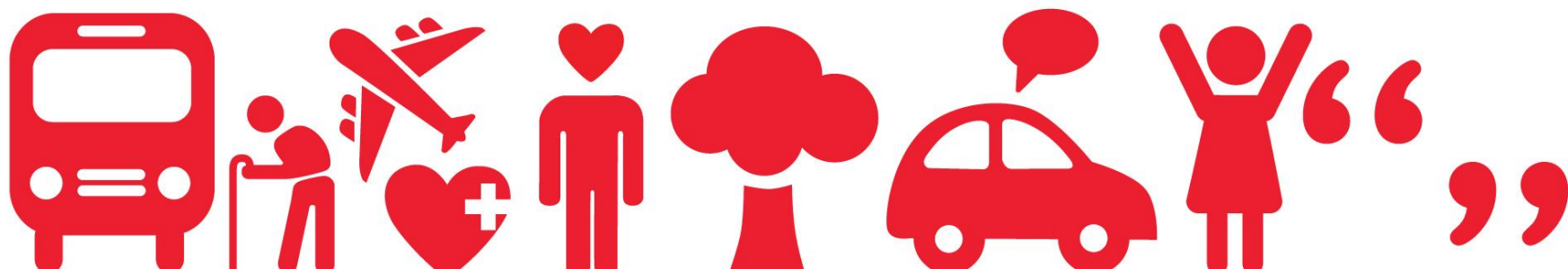


Why is cognitive testing important for cross-national surveys like the European Health Interview Survey & the European Social Survey?

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Presentation Plan

1. Importance of cognitive testing on cross-national projects
2. Challenges and practical solutions for cross-national teams
3. General observations


Two Examples

The European Health Interview Survey

- General Health Survey
- General population
- Wave 1 (2007-2009) in 21 countries
- Cognitive Testing Qs for Wave 2 (2014)
- 4 partner countries (Belgium, Estonia, Germany, UK)

The European Social Survey

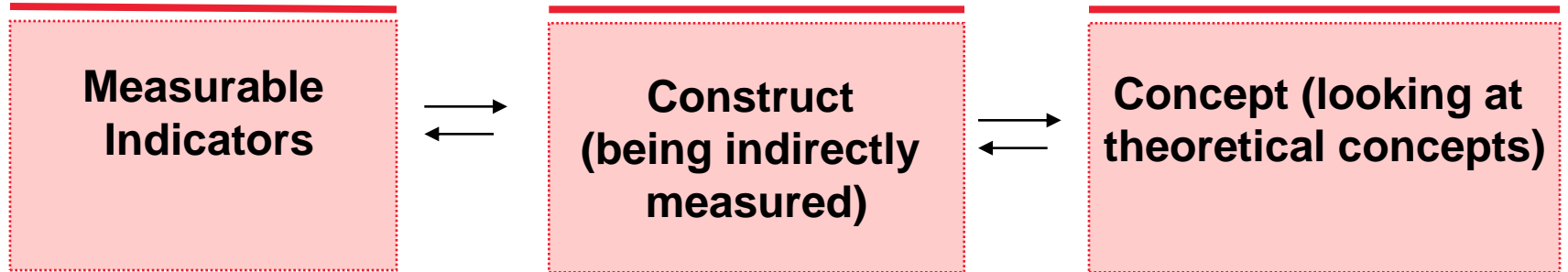
- Attitudinal Survey
- General population
- Wave 5 (2010-2011) in 28 Countries
- Cognitive testing Qs for Wave 6 (2013)
- 5 partner countries (Bulgaria, Austria, Israel, Portugal and the UK)



“As with any research strategy, cross-national research comes at a price: It is costly in time and money; it is difficult to do; it often seems to raise more interpretive problems than it solves”

(Kohn 1989:77 cited in Harkness et al 2003:3)

Question design



Source Harkness et al 2003:11

Why is cognitive testing important?

- Ambiguity of natural language
- Concepts and categories have fuzzy edges
- Conversational norms violated in survey context
 - negotiation of meaning is stilted
 - misunderstandings are difficult to repair
- Result: intent and meaning of questions may not match respondent's understanding of that intent and meaning
- Question testing can help detect where standardisation of meaning breaks down and repair questions before going into the field

Why is cross-national cognitive testing important?

- Source questions may be culturally specific
- Concepts may not be common
- Concepts may not be measured by the same constructs
- Language to express constructs may differ
- Researchers/ translators may not be typical

Challenges and Practical Solutions

- Challenge
 - Cognitive testing is a qualitative approach
 - Variation in practice between and within countries
 - Under-developed literature
 - Language barriers
 - Dispersed research teams
- Practical Solutions
 - Adopt a consistent approach from the start
 - Sampling and recruitment
 - Interviewing and probing
 - Analysis and recommendations
 - Common and clear timetables

General Observations

- Role of the coordinating centre
- Communication is key to success
- Ensure objectives are clear to all
- Use skills and knowledge of all research teams

- Outcomes of cross-national cognitive testing
 - Meaningful cross-national comparisons
 - Valid and reliable data
 - Efficient use of resources (time and money)

Thank you

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