TWO SENSITIZATION METHODS TO ENHANCE PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT DURING THE CONDUCT OF AN ONLINE DISCRETE CHOICE EXPERIMENT: A CASE STUDY

Mickle AT, Popoff E, Corepal R, Lozano-Ortega G
Broadstreet Health Economics and Outcomes Research, Vancouver BC, Canada

RATIONALE AND OBJECTIVES

- Discrete choice experiments (DCEs) are valuable for understanding and quantifying participant preferences of health interventions and their associated attributes.
- Choice tasks can be taxing on the respondent and engagement is necessary to produce reliable results. However, when in-person interviews are infeasible, participant-led, portal-based surveys may be conducted.
- Often, patient recruitment is achieved through online patient panels; in this setting, survey "speedsters" are common.
- We evaluated two methods of sensitizing DCE respondents to the importance of respondent engagement.

METHODS

- First, we added text describing the importance of carefully considering each preference task, and the potential end-stage implications of this research, just prior to the DCE. In the second, participants were contacted via phone to relay similar information. Finally, a third control group without sensitization was included.
- Time to survey completion was recorded in all cases and the distributions of times were compared using the Wilcoxon rank sum test as data were not normally distributed.
- Exploratory analyses aimed to look at completion time amongst sensitization groups, stratified by baseline characteristics (e.g., sec, age, marital status, and household income).

Table 1. Baseline characteristics of the 249 included participants

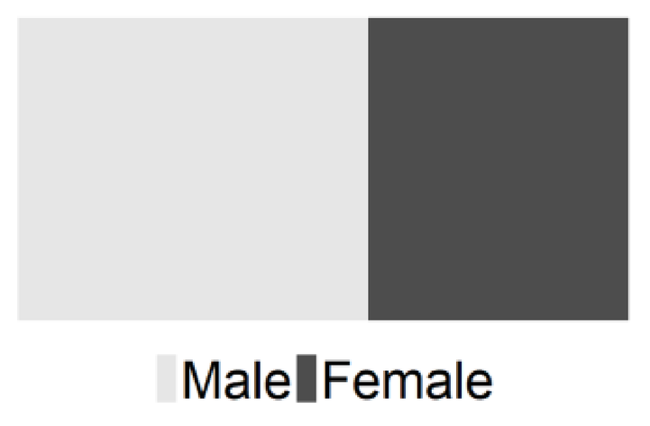
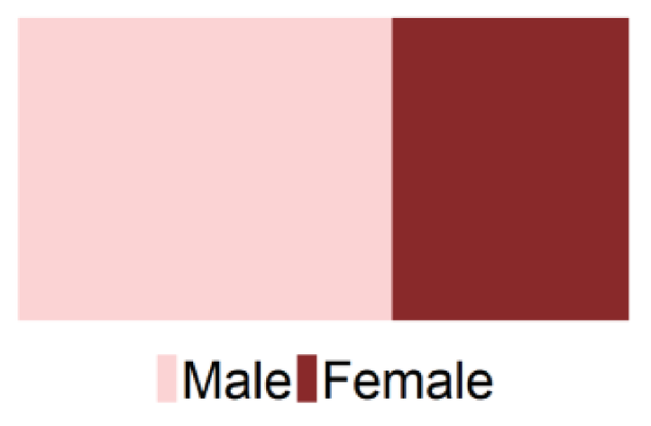
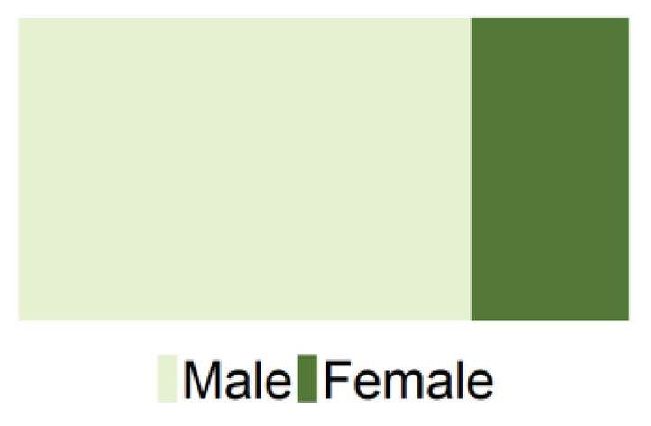
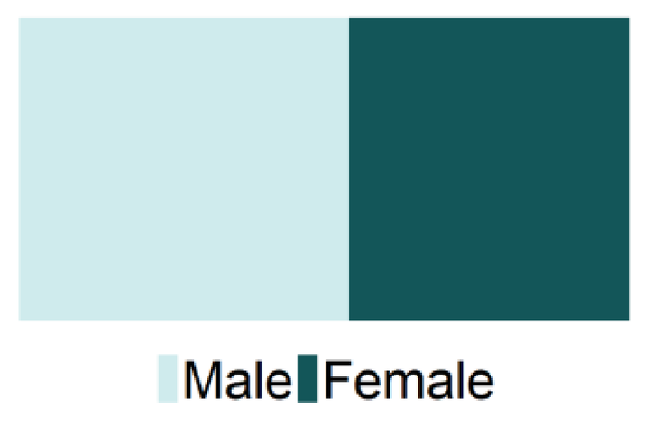
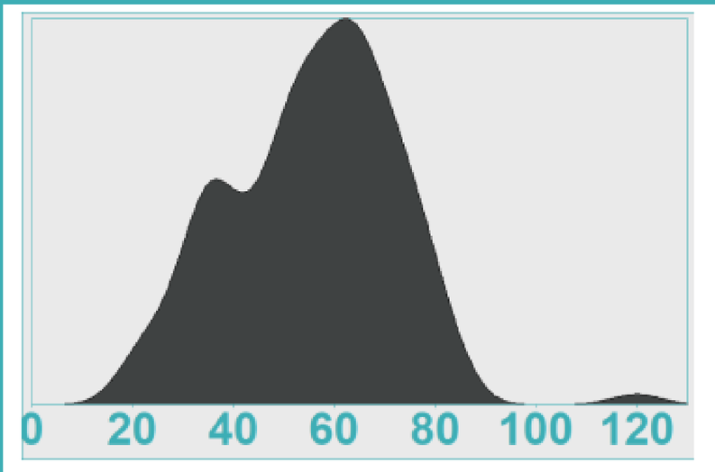
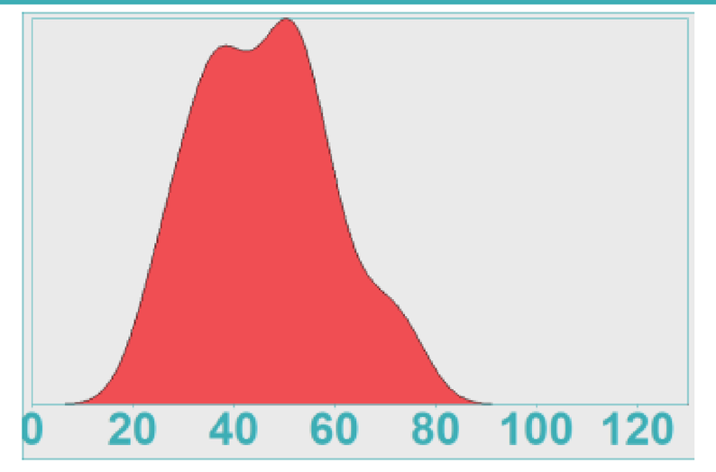
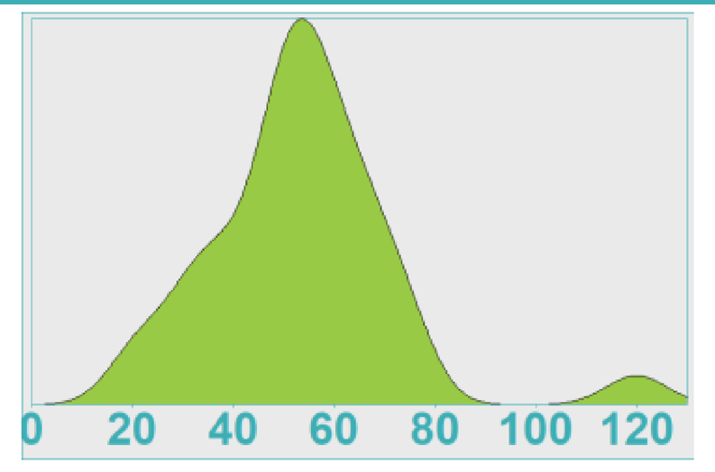
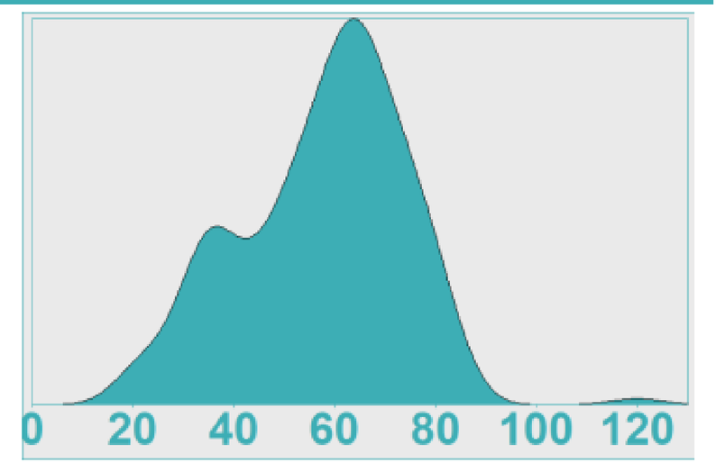
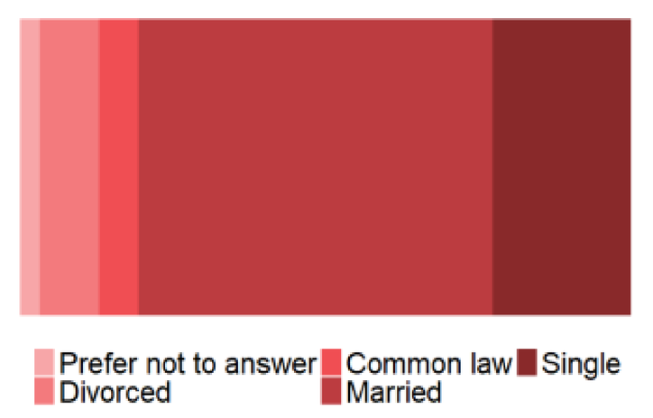
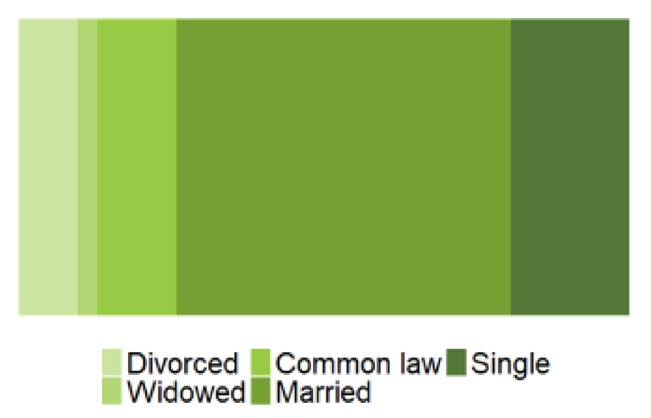
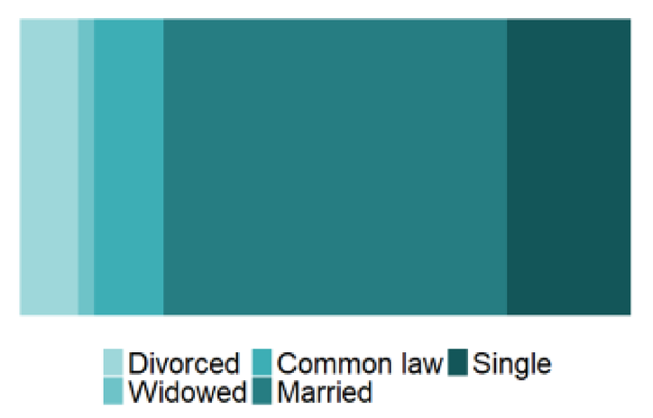
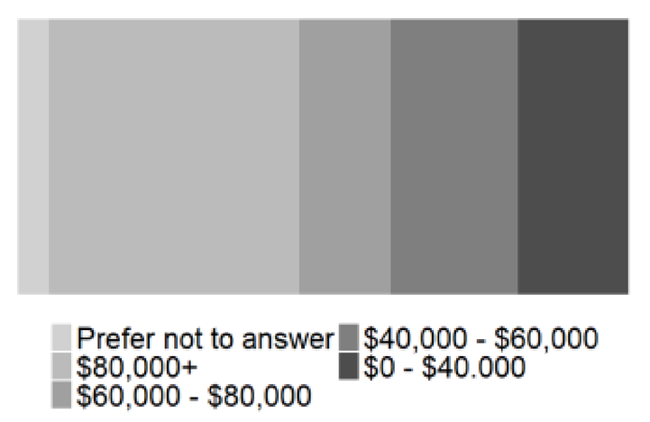
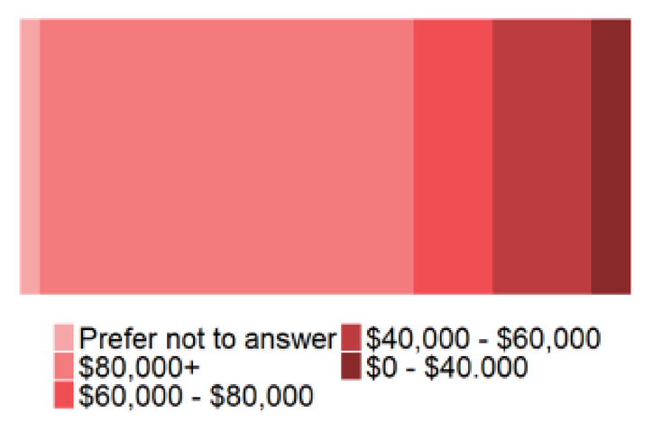
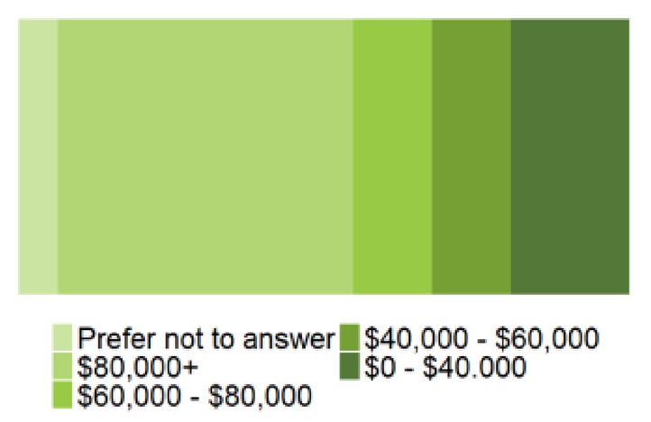
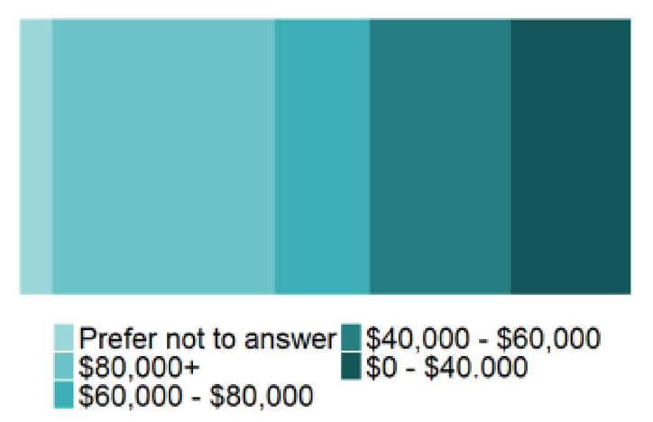
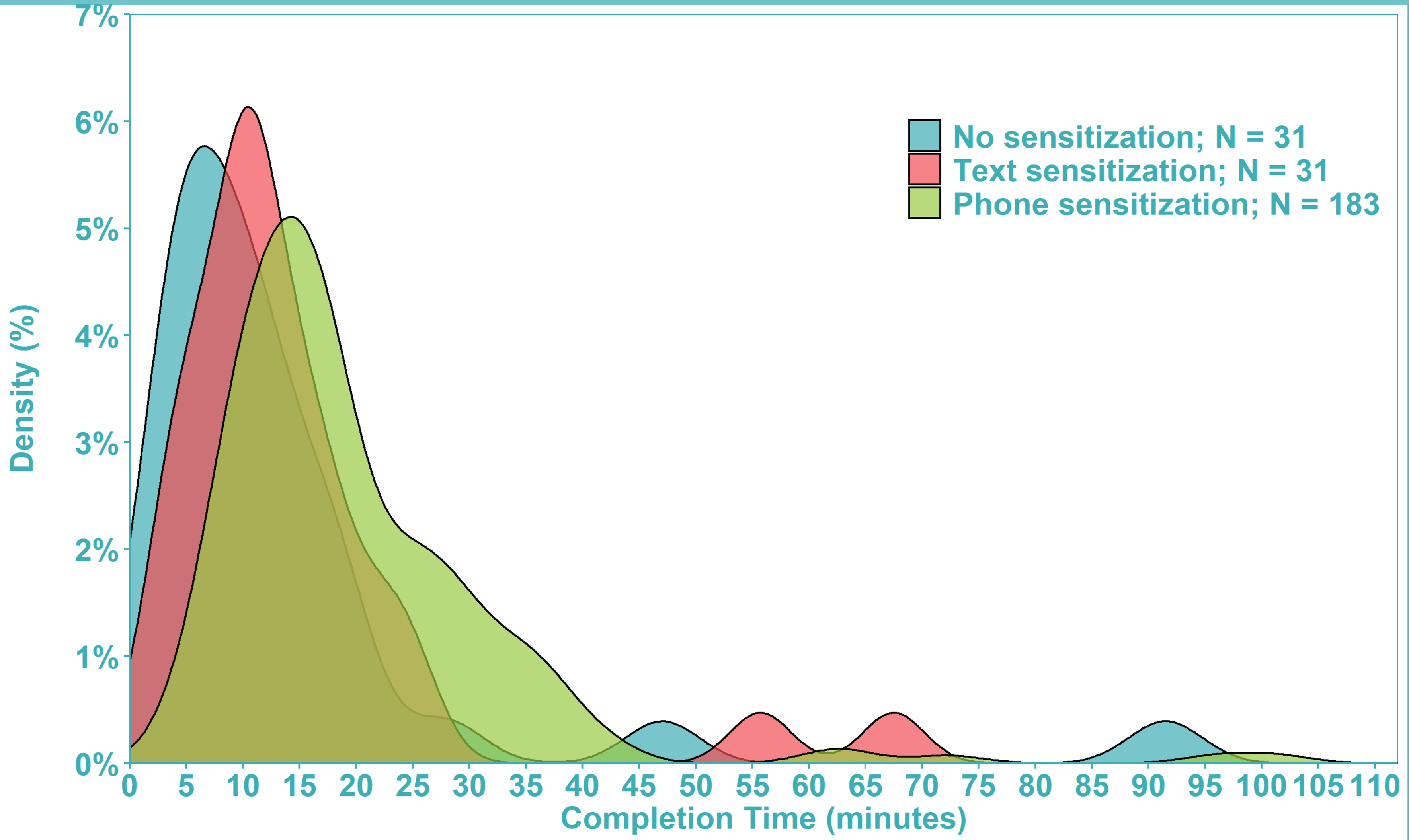
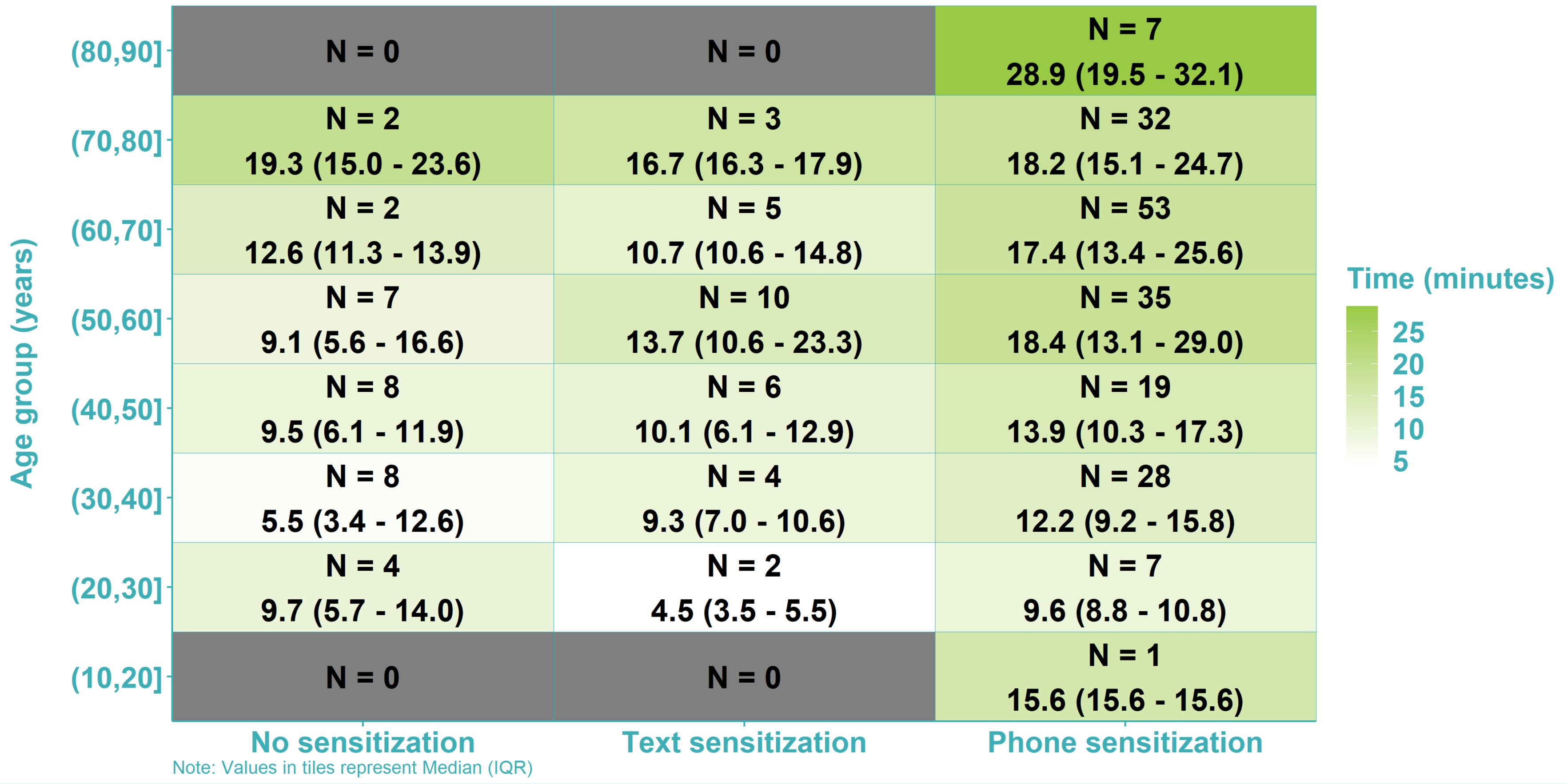
	Overall	Sensitization group		
		NONE	TEXT	PHONE
N	249	31	31	187
Sex, n (%)				
Male	143 (57.4)	19 (61.3)	23 (74.2)	101 (54.0)
Age (years)				
Mean (SD)	55.7 (16.6)	46.1 (13.2)	53.6 (18.6)	57.7 (16.2)
Median (IQR)	57.0 (44.0, 67.0)	47.0 (36.5, 53.5)	52.0 (44.5, 62.5)	61.0 (46.0, 69.0)
Marital status, n (%)				
Single	51 (20.5)	7 (22.6)	6 (19.4)	38 (20.3)
Married	140 (56.2)	18 (58.1)	17 (54.8)	105 (56.1)
Common law	27 (10.8)	2 (6.5)	4 (12.9)	21 (11.2)
Widowed	6 (2.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.2)	5 (2.7)
Divorced	24 (9.6)	3 (9.7)	3 (9.7)	18 (9.6)
Prefer not to answer	1 (0.4)	1 (3.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Household income (CAD), n (%)				
$0 - $40,000	45 (18.1)	2 (6.5)	6 (19.4)	37 (19.8)
$40,000 - $60,000	52 (20.9)	5 (16.1)	4 (12.9)	43 (23.0)
$60,000 - $80,000	37 (14.9)	4 (12.9)	4 (12.9)	29 (15.5)
$80,000+	102 (41.0)	19 (61.3)	15 (48.4)	68 (36.4)
Prefer not to answer	13 (5.2)	1 (3.2)	2 (6.5)	10 (5.3)

Figure 1. Density plot showing completion time distribution by sensitization method



Notes: removed outliers (>2 hours) as we assumed people left their computer on and were not actively participating

Figure 2. Completion time by sensitization, stratified by age group



Notes: removed people listed as age over 100 as we assumed these were an input error

BROADSTREET

CONCLUSION

Sensitization methods involving in-person phone calls prior to conducting self-led, internet portal based DCEs may increase participant engagement producing more reliable results. The implications are widespread given the increasing necessity of conducting research using online surveys.

RESULTS

- Baseline characteristics are presented overall and by sensitization group (Table 1).
- Median (Q1 – Q3) completion time (minutes) for the no sensitization group (n = 31) was 9.7 (5.2 – 14.9); the text sensitization group (n = 31) was 10.7 (8.3 – 16.4); and the phone sensitization group (n = 187) was 16.8 (12.4 – 25.4; Figure 1).
- Compared with no sensitization, the difference in the distribution of completion times for text sensitization was not statistically significant (p = 0.20); however, for those who received phone sensitization, there was a statistically significant difference in the distribution of completion times compared to those with no sensitization (p < 0.0001; Figure 1).
- Exploratory analyses of completion time amongst the sensitization groups, suggested that increasing age may have also contributed to increased time to survey completion (Figure 2) ; however, sample sizes were too small after stratification to confirm this trend.