

Dealing with non-response

in the Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement (SHARE)

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Tackling and overcoming non-response in cohort and survey studies – a national symposium for researchers and stakeholders

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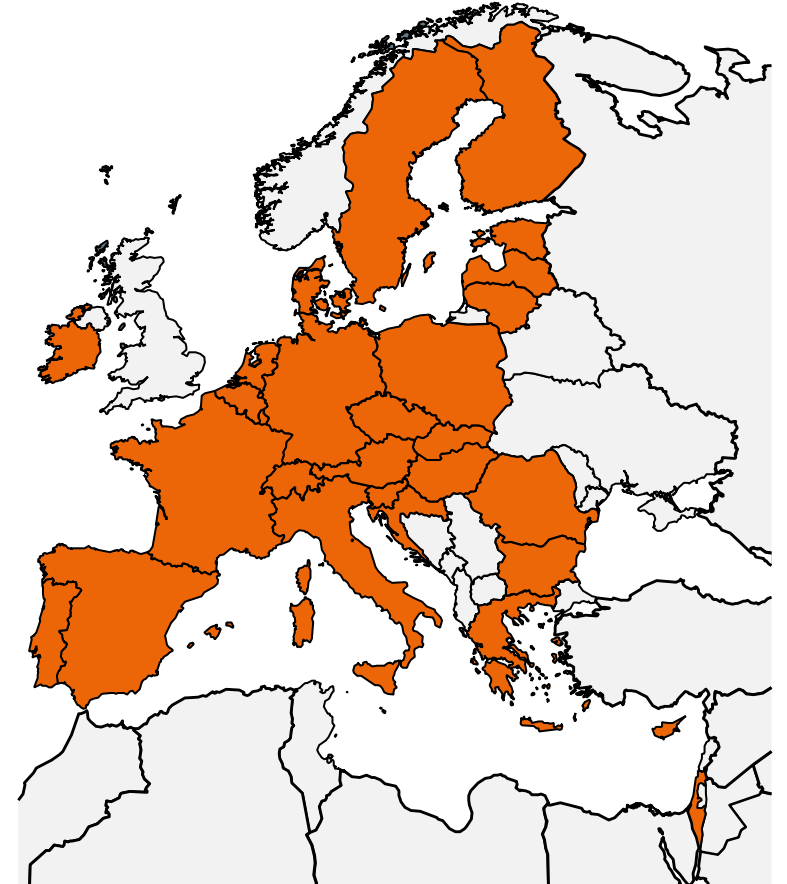


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on Aging

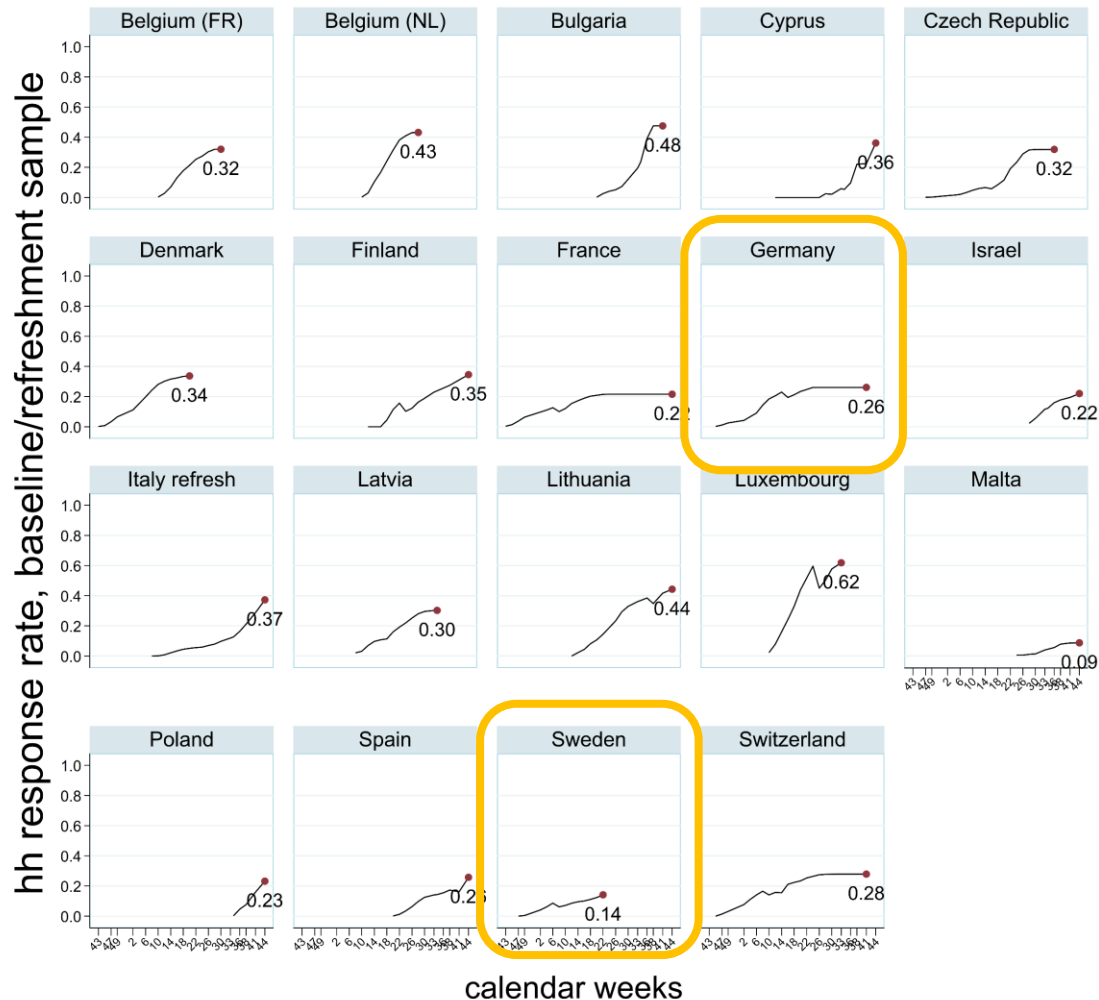
SHARE in a Nutshell

Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe

- Biennial representative cross-national household panel survey of 50+ population in 27 European countries & Israel
- Started in 2004, Wave 10 fieldwork started in 2024 (face-to-face)
- Around 616.000 face-to-face interviews with over 160.000 respondents
- Two additional SHARE Corona Surveys (2020 and 2021) by phone
- Ex-ante harmonisation – centralised procurement, questionnaire development, sampling, data collection instrument, and database management
- Broad range of topics (e.g., health, economic and living conditions, social relationships) and (objective physical) measures
- Free data access for researchers: <http://www.share-eric.eu>
- **Measures to reduce non-response: advance letters, contact strategies, panel care (address search, flyers, brochures, holiday cards), incentives (respondents/interviewers)**



Response rates - Recruitment Samples

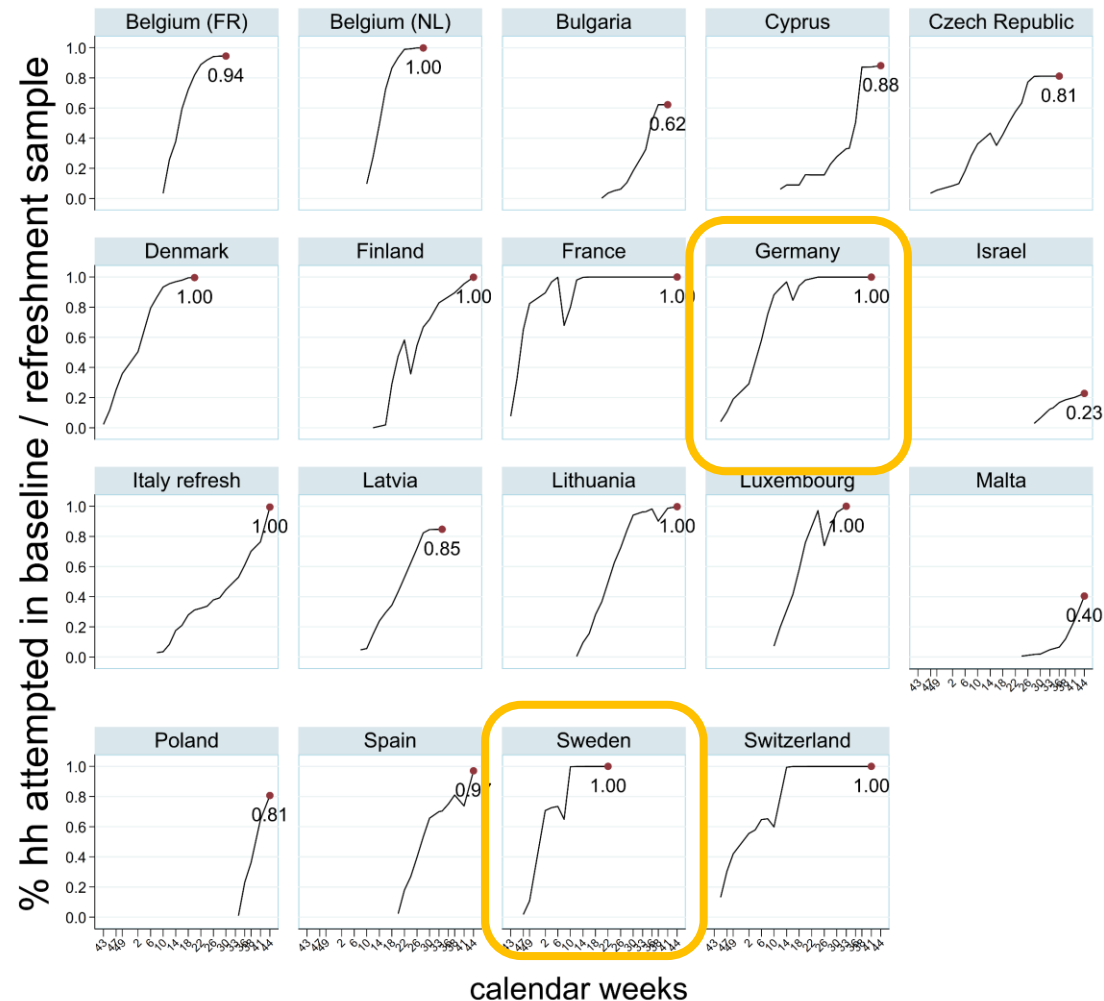


Graphs by country

No country with 50% or more
(Luxembourg was pre-screened)

Why are response rates so low?

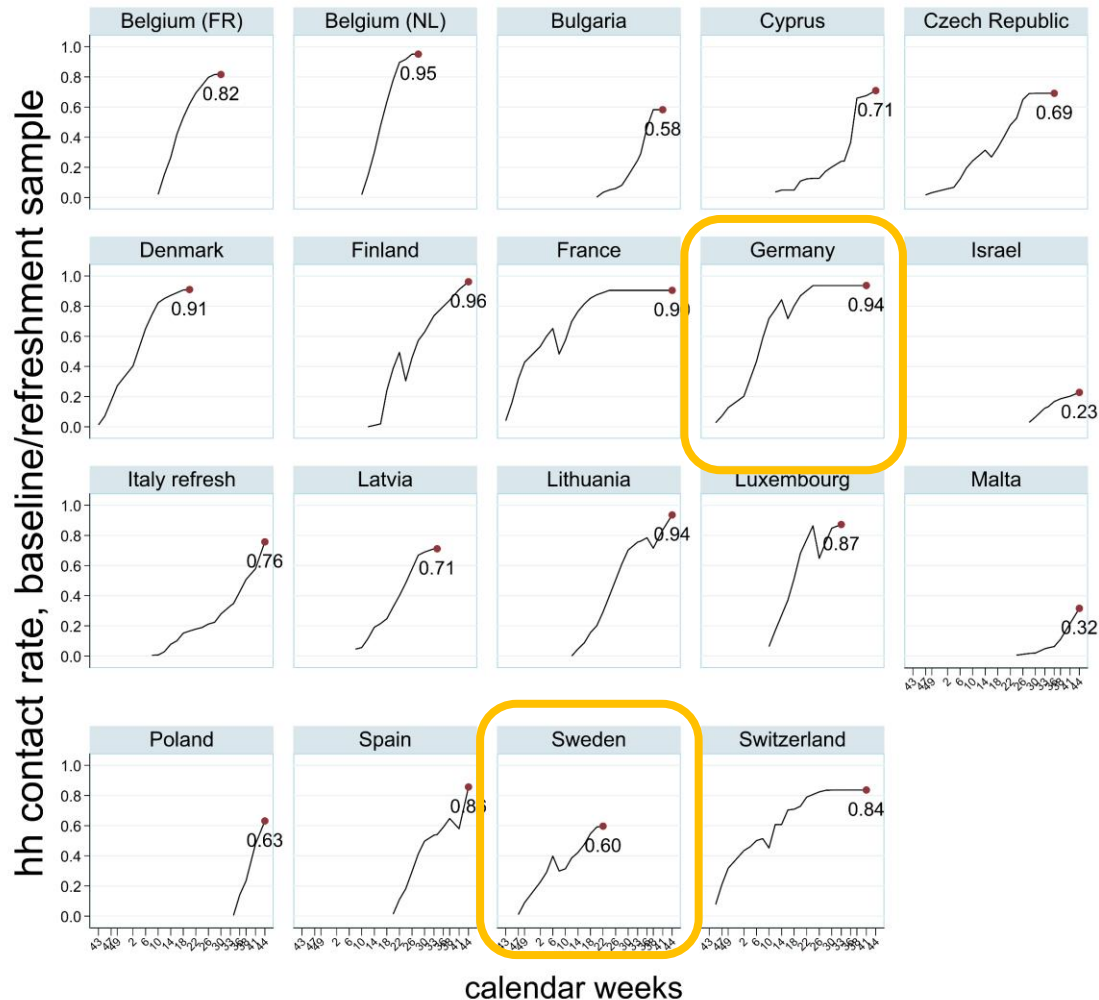
Attempted HHs - Recruitment Samples



Graphs by country

For some countries attempts are an issue, but for many that is not the problem

Contacted HHs - Recruitment Samples

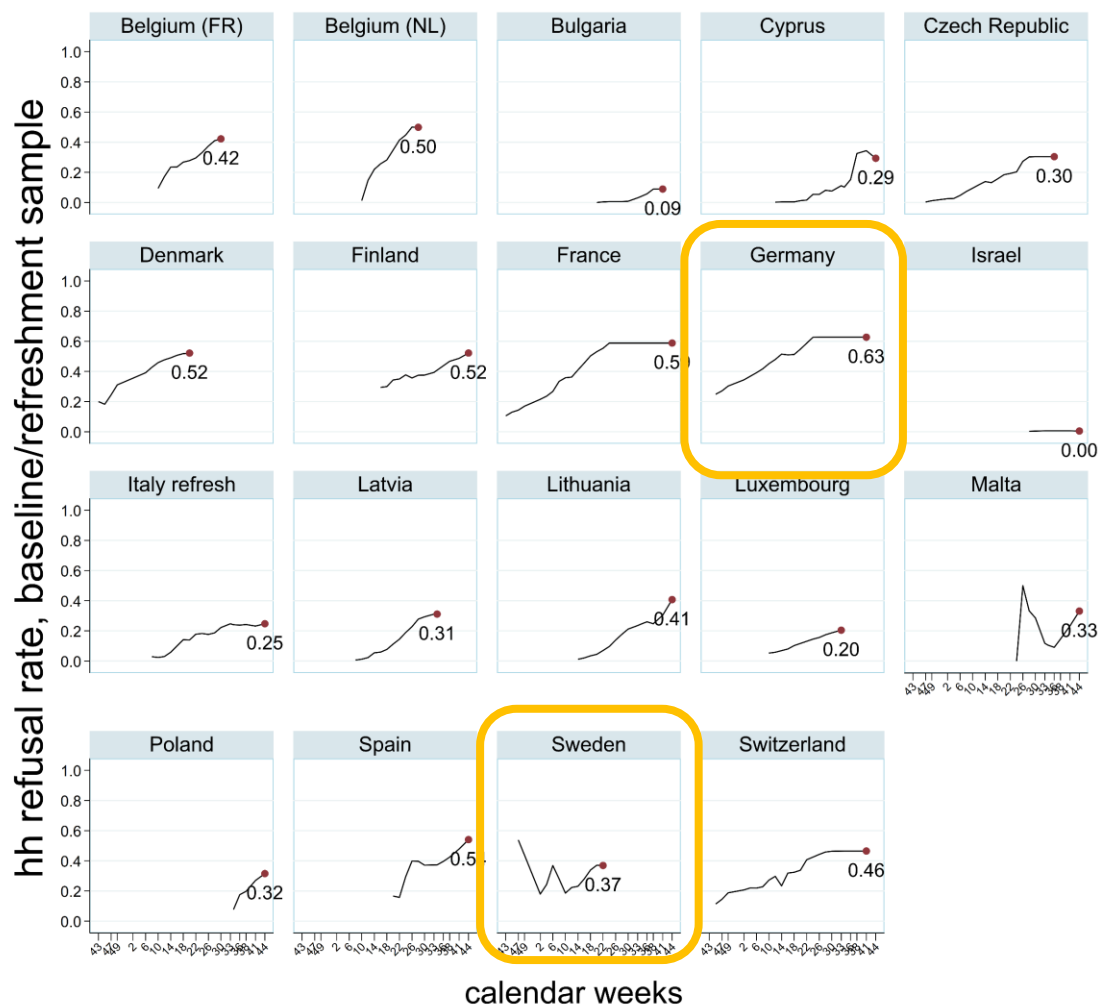


Graphs by country

Contact rates are slightly lower than attempts in most countries

Sweden has a contacting problem

Refusal rates - Recruitment Samples



Graphs by country

Refusal rates – given contact – vary substantially

Germany has a refusal problem

Respondent Driven Contact

- Experimental interventions to improve fieldwork outcomes
- Sweden and Germany for cross-country comparisons



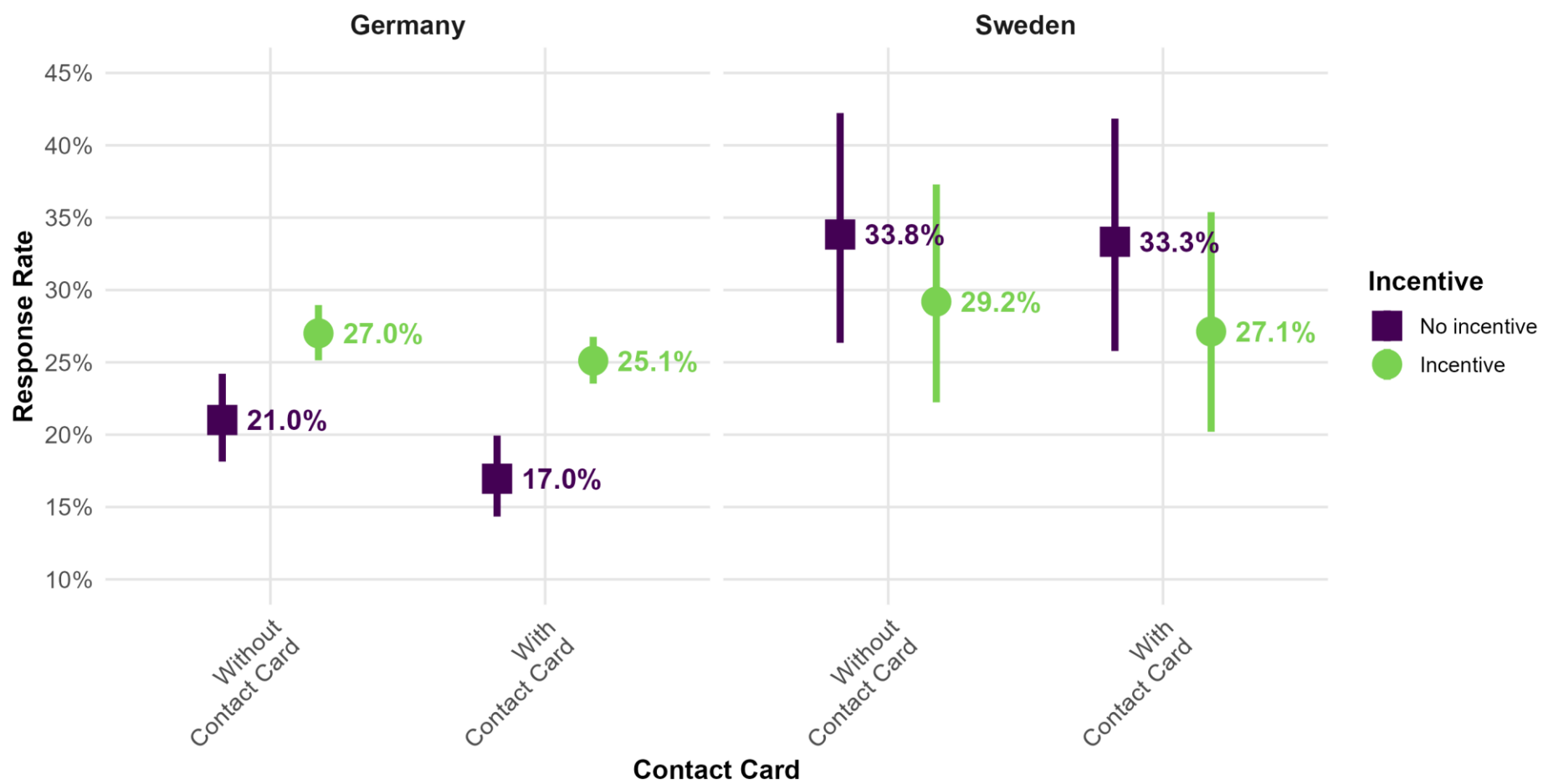
Joint work with Michael Bergmann, Alexander Schumacher (both SHARE-DE),
Filip Fors Connolly, Jenny Olofsson, Gunnar Malmberg (all SHARE-SE)

Preliminary Results

Includes only
interviews and
refusals!

Response Rates by Experimental Condition

Germany: N = 6210 | Sweden: N = 528



Take-home messages

- **Understand the whole fieldwork process!**
 - Qualitatively: Talk regularly to all involved - at least the survey agency
 - Quantitatively: Get detailed, timely monitoring data
- **Find specific solutions for your country/study!**
 - Response issues are heterogeneous
 - Interventions work differently in different settings

→ *More comparative research is needed*

Thanks!

Have you got any questions?

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Bluesky



LinkedIn

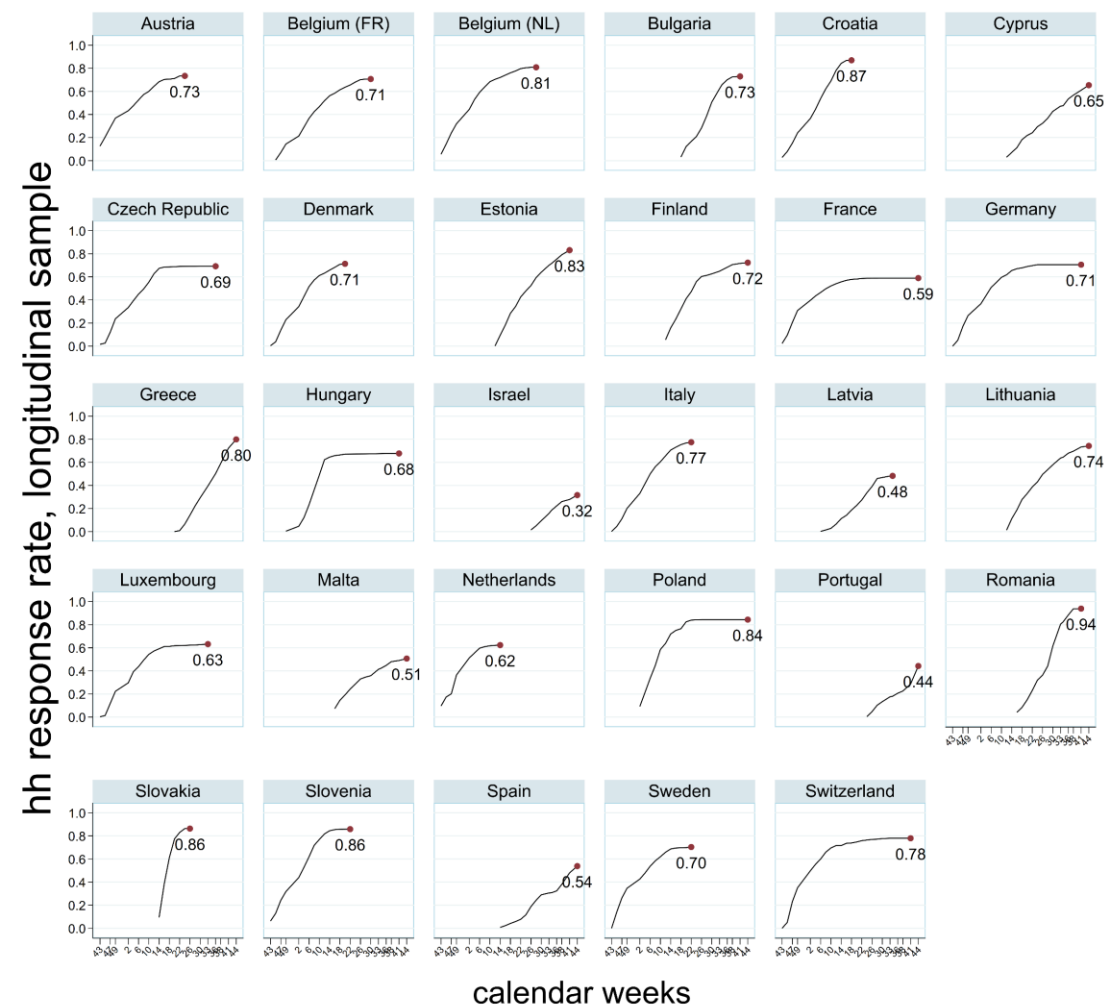


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Response rates - Panel Samples

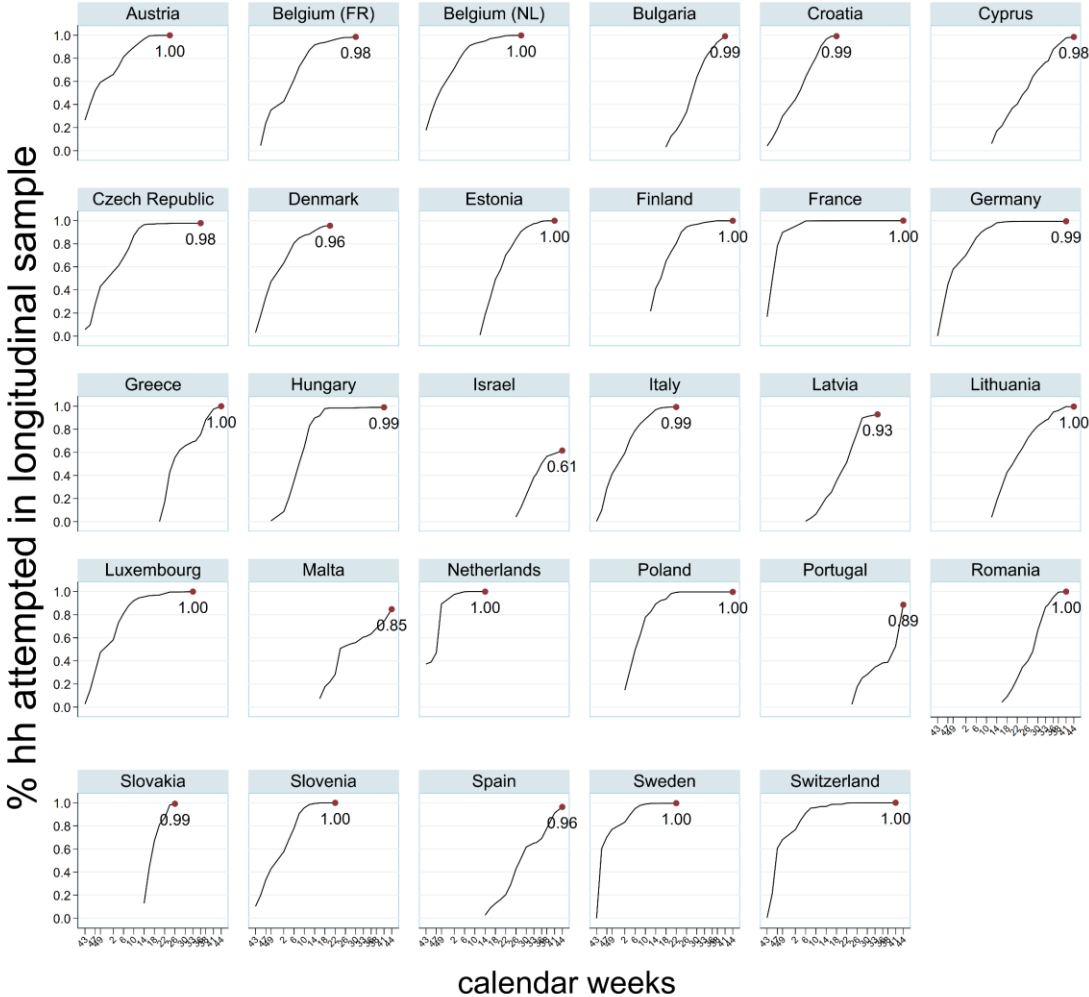


Graphs by country

Most countries with 70% or more

Sweden 70%
Germany 71%

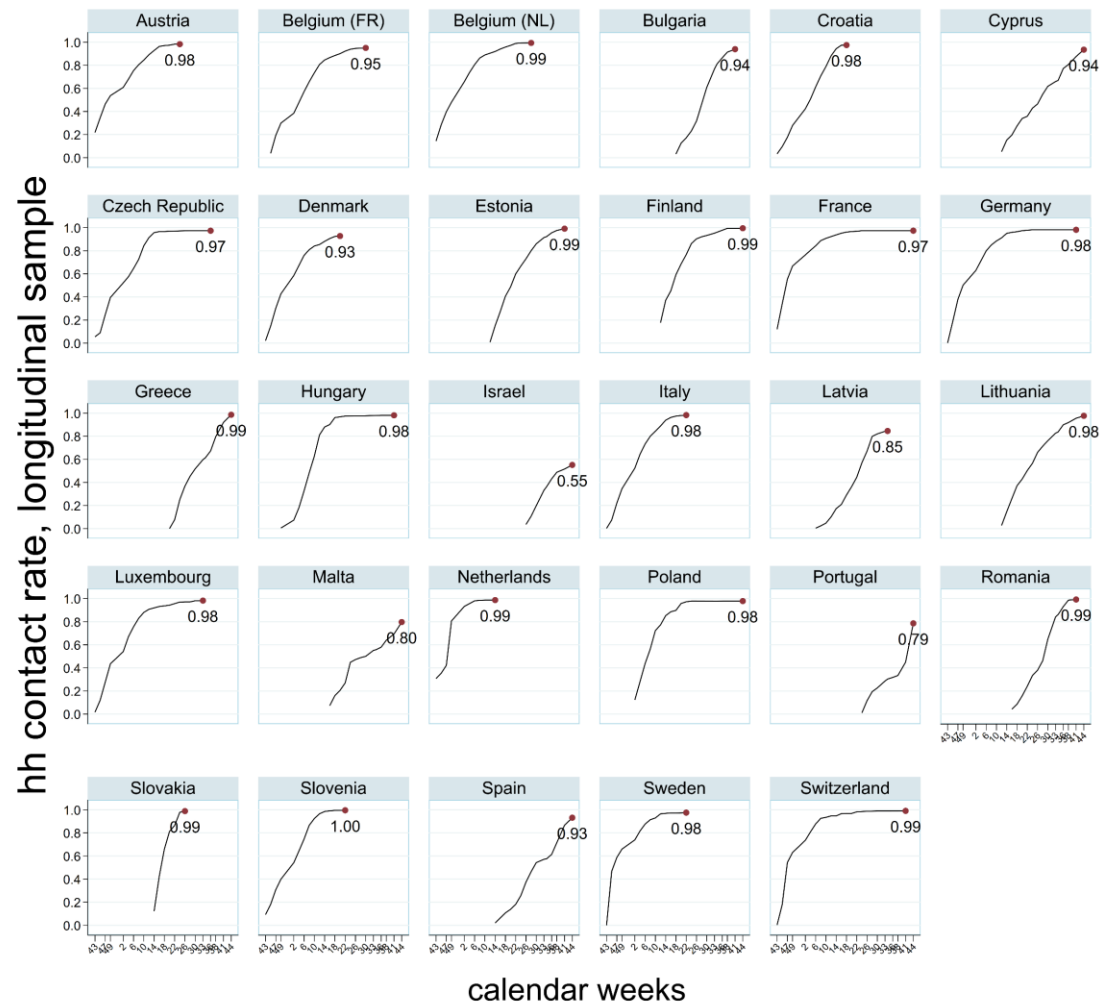
Attempted HHs - Panel Samples



Attempts are not an issue in panel samples

Graphs by country

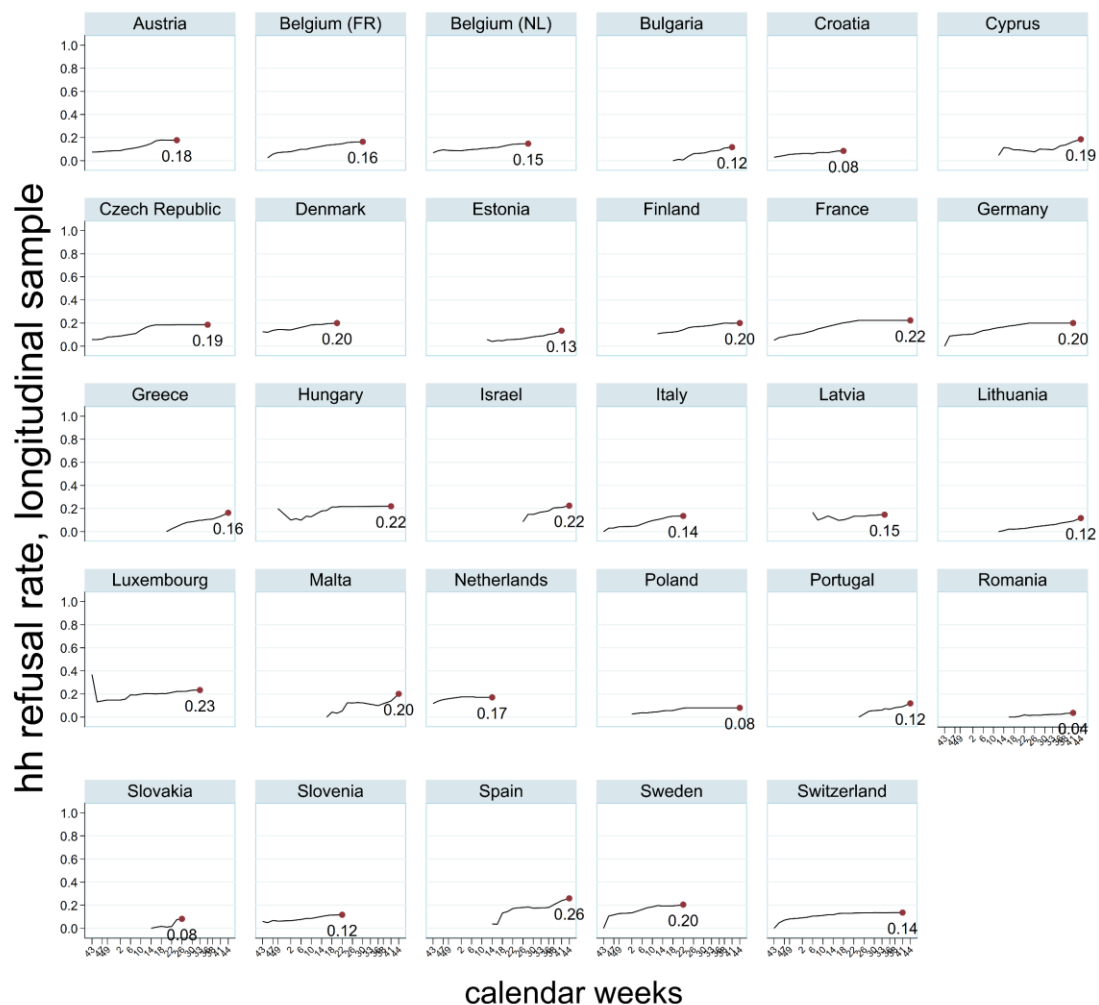
Contacted HHs - Panel Samples



With very few exceptions contacts are also not an issue

Graphs by country

Refusal rates - Panel Samples



Graphs by country

Conditioned on having already participated in the past, refusal rates are fairly low, although still an important factor

Sweden and Germany are on the medium to high end