

# Methodological Considerations in a Community-Based Longitudinal Study

Roy F. Oman, PhD; Sara K. Vesely, PhD; Cheryl B. Aspy, PhD; Janene Fluhr, MS; LaDonna Marshall; George Calhoun, MEd; Sharon Rodine, MEd

---

**Objectives:** To describe methodological issues and strategies relevant to conducting a community-based longitudinal study. **Methods:** Study participants (N=1117 youth/parent pairs) residing in neighborhoods that were randomly selected using a multi-stage sampling procedure and 2000 census data. Data were collected annually using in-home, in-person, computer-assisted interviewing methods. Numerous retention methods were used to track and retain participants. **Re-**

**sults:** The initial response rate was 61%. The retention rate is 97%, and the valid interview completion rate is 93% after nearly 4 waves of data collection. **Conclusions:** In order for community-based longitudinal studies to overcome barriers to enrollment and retention, particular attention must be given to appropriate planning and available resources.

**Key words:** community-based longitudinal study, sampling, retention

*Am J Health Behav.* 2009;33(1):58-68

---