HSM 470
Research Methods and Data Analysis in Health Sciences

Observational Methods
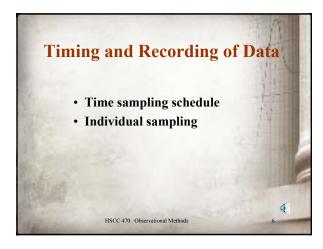

Unit Objectives

Upon completion of this unit, the student will be able to:

- – List the 4 methods of data collection.
- – Explain the advantages and disadvantages of observational methods.
- – List and describe the types of behavior to observe.
- – Compare and contrast controlled and uncontrolled observational methods.

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4 Methods of data collection

- • **Observation**
- • **Survey**
- • **Secondary data analysis**
- • **Qualitative research**

- • **Each method has its benefits and limitations, therefore triangulation is advantageous.**

Advantages of Observation

- **Directness**
- **Use of natural settings**
- **Alternative when verbal or written responses are inadequate.**
- **Observation of contextual background**

Types of Behavior to Observe

- **Nonverbal**
- **Spatial**
- **Extralinguistic**
- **Linguistic**

Timing and Recording of Data

- **Time sampling schedule**
- **Individual sampling**

Types of Observation

- **Controlled observations**
  - Laboratory experimentation
  - Experimental and mundane realism
  - Sources of bias
    - Demand characteristics
    - Experimenter bias
    - Measurement artifacts
  - Field experimentation
- **Uncontrolled observations (qualitative research)**