Session 4: Interviewing Techniques
Session Overview

Summary
In this session, we will discuss the different methods of interviewing, standardization of interviews, interviewer training, including interviewing techniques and respondent confidentiality.

Questionnaire design and interview methods are interrelated in the overall process of an outbreak investigation.

The primary purpose of interviews in outbreak investigations is to collect data for case identification, risk factor identification, or hypothesis generation.

Interviews can be interviewer administered (face-to-face or telephone) or self-administered (mailed, emailed, or Web-based). There are advantages and disadvantages to employing either method.

Survey data collection error is a result of both bias and variance in the interview process. Interviewer error can be prevented with adequate interviewer training and the standardization of the questionnaire.

Sound interviewing procedures include: reading questions exactly as they are worded; probing inadequate answers; recording answers without interviewer discretion; and maintaining rapport with respondents. An interviewer manual is something you can also develop to provide interviewer support. Such documentation reduces error and enhances the quality of data collected.

Intended Audience
All public health, medical, veterinary, pharmacy, emergency management, hospital and other professionals interested in public health preparedness and field epidemiology.

Running Time
35 minutes of lecture
20 minutes for pre-test, post-test, and evaluation
Optional Discussion: 15 minutes (approximate)
Learning Objectives

- Describe the advantages and disadvantages of different interview methods
- Identify strategies to reduce interviewer error
- List topics to address in interviewer training
- Outline confidentiality concerns of both the respondent and the outbreak investigator