

Sampling Methods

Sampling method	Advantages	Disadvantages
Random sampling	Minimal bias. Most statistical theory assumes the use of a random sample	Potentially difficult to do. Can still have an unrepresentative sample. Potentially time-consuming or expensive. Population members can rarely be listed.
Systematic Sampling	Convenient if the population members can be listed.	Population members can rarely be listed.
Stratified Sampling	Each stratum of interest is fairly represented in the sample. Minimal bias.	More complicated than random sampling. Information about the population needs to be known to minimise bias. Population members can rarely be listed.
Cluster Sampling	Useful if members of the population are grouped in clusters e.g. reduced travelling. More convenient than random or stratified sampling.	Less variation in smaller clusters than in the whole population
Judgemental sampling	Easy and convenient to do.	Not random, potentially biased. Relies solely on the judgement of the sampler, who may or may not be correct themselves.
Snowball sampling	Sample elements are always of interest.	Not random, potentially biased. Relies on other people to volunteer information.