

# Quantitative Research

## Long term study of cancer carers

## University research

### Project Outline

The Psychology Department of a metropolitan university was conducting a three year study of cancer carers to determine the problems they encountered.

### Research strategy

The department had obtained an Australian Research Council grant to monitor the long term problems encountered by people engaged in the care of adult cancer patients living at home. Working closely with ASR, the department developed a suitable questionnaire. Survey Manager, ASR's proprietary software, was used to construct the questionnaire and manage the project as an anonymous survey.

The research strategy involved canvassing cancer carers through the Cancer Council of NSW and affiliated organisations. Hyperlinks to Survey Manager were set up on the Cancer Council website and the University web site. Carers were encouraged to complete the questionnaire by the various bodies involved in cancer care.

The survey was initially planned to run for three years, but at the end of this period it was extended by six months.

Data was extracted periodically by ASR and written to an SPSS file for delivery to the Psychology Department. This enabled the researchers to analyse the data progressively and to integrate the results with other components of the research project.

### Outcomes

Survey Manager provided the ideal tool for managing a long term project. The survey could be kept open for an extended period. Periodic data downloads enabled the researchers to work with partial data so that they could proceed with the design of their analysis. By using Survey Manager's web administration module, the university could monitor progress and instruct ASR when it wanted data extracted and when it wanted the survey closed. The university had confidence that their long-term data set was secure on ASR's production servers, which are backed up twice daily.

“Progressive measurement over time”