Novus Using public opinion polling to track a pandemic

Sweden

2022-11-13

”Making knowledge great again”
About Novus

"Making knowledge great again"

Novus is Sweden's best-known polling and market research company
Work with the biggest TV channel, SVT, national television
and biggest radio SR, national radio.

Novus is the polling company for SVT
Torbjörn is CEO and lead pollster, debater, actively protecting reliable polls in Sweden

Working with government, universities, news, private companies, about ALL issues.
800 research projects per year
Full service, qual and quant

Only do probability-based data collection
Research is a way to get knowledge - A knowledge company
About Novus panel

Probability based = Known panel

Built, invested in and maintained for 15 years

50 000 randomly selected individuals via mobile, sms or postcard

Not to be confused with
Non-probability based = non-known panel
How to do reliable research

Random sample
Well known brand
Short survey
Neutral questions
Pedagogical understandable questions
Not too many times (1 per month in average)
Not the same type in a row
Qualcontrol & if needed: Nonresponse analysis

Reliable research
Low & random nonresponse
Cati ca 50 %
On line 60-70%

Novus = 5-6 min
When the pandemic hit Sweden

There were no data...
No testing...
No strategy for population estimation
No idea about the total impact

Only test those needing intensive care
About Novus Coronastatus

Started March 17, 2020
Initially 1000 interviews per day

We tracked:
Behavior
Health, self estimation and symptoms
Trust

Because the government did not do this in Sweden
University (KTH) did one random pcr test in Stockholm spring 2020.
Novus self reporting within margin of error

Now, over 100 000 interviews... Over 60 reports, almost 2 years of data

Financed 100 % by Novus
How many were sick?

Expected a peak, but…

Increase after summer

%
How many got sick?
According to Official statistics

- First confirmed: 31/1
- Pandemic in Sweden: 17/3
- Mortality rate: 8%?!
- Mortality rate: 13%?!
- Official confirmed: 670,000
According to our research. And also, When did they get sick?

Mortality rate 0.8%
People just did not get well...
1 million sick and 300 000 over 10 weeks
500 000 symptom free
Symptoms

- Sniffles
- Heacache
- Tired (unusually)
- Sore throat
- Pain in body/muscles
- Stinging eyes
- Skipped meals
- Coughing long time
- Diarrhea
- Lost the voice
- Fever
- Loss of smell
- Loss of taste
- Trouble breathing

20210222
20200419
20200405
But... Public opinion polling on medical issues?

The logic about health system is that you know if you are sick

Then you seek medical help

Need good sample to do population estimation

Self diagnosing/reporting worked when clinical test were not there

The cost for this is basically zero (compared to alternative costs)
14 % = 1,1 million adults have problems with long term illness that is not a known chronic disease
## Symptoms

### Novus oct 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>All long term sick now</th>
<th>Confirmed covid</th>
<th>More than 12 months</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>extreme fatigue, mental and physical</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss/change of taste</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of breath</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fever</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble with stomach</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest pain</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trouble swallowing, loss appetite</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore in nose</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How bad is it for the long term sick?
Novus oct 2022

330,000 say it limits their life

- 100,000 say it severely limits their life
- 230,000 say it partly limits their life
- 100,000 say it is not very limiting
- 330,000 say it do not limit them at all
- 1% say they don't know
Insights from Novus Coronastatus

The data we could confirm, within margin of error
Number of vaccinated (2%)
Number of confirmed cases (1.8%) (after Sweden finally got the testing going)
Number of layed off
Self diagnosing worked great (when there were no tests)

Novus panel is fantastic for population estimation

We could plot WHEN people got sick (government forgot that detail...)

Other confirmed behavior changes
Elderly stayed at home
Swedes worked from home
Swedes cancelled their vacations
We followed the recommendations
Sick did not want to burden health care systems
Etc.
WAPOR Reflection: Two pillars for our industry

Research industry

Population estimation

Explain human behavior
WAPOR Reflection:
Two pillars for our industry

Research industry

Population estimation

Explain human behavior
WAPOR Reflection: Two pillars for our industry

Research industry

Explain human behavior
Summary

"We CAN make knowledge great again"

Good On-line probability-based panels WORK for population estimation

Differentiate data collection and sample quality

Cheaper to ask questions on-line -> more money to build a panel!

There is no excuse to not use probability-based samples

Data is not for free

Reliable knowledge is invaluable

Everything is about understanding the collective human behaviour

We have no future if we can not do population estimations

Contact me!

Torbjörn Sjöström

torbjorn.sjostrom@novus.se

www.novus.se