

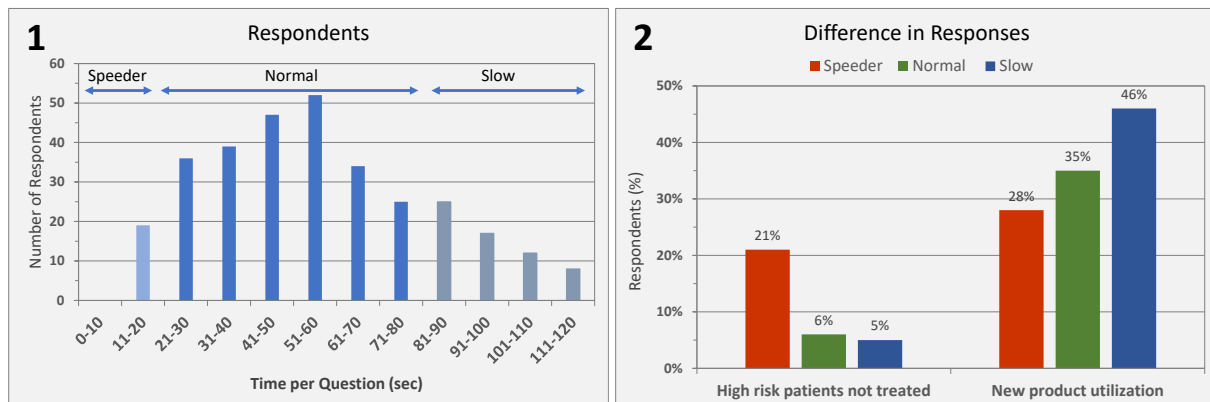


Speeding does add Bias (not merely Noise)

Sure, some people are faster than others ... - agreed, **but**: In an online pharma survey reading a complex question about treatment choice, going through a considerable list of response options, selecting preference shares and for various patient settings in 10-20 sec? Quite an achievement – or, presumably more likely, indicating that this respondent has not really read the question and simply checked the boxes in a random / pattern manner?!

So, does this really apply to market research conducted with expert medical professionals who are questioned about their professional experience? And, will this behavior effect the results of the survey?

As shown in Fig. 1 for a survey on current treatment of a complex medical condition, the average time per question for all respondents was 41 sec. Some 19 respondents spent less than half the time, (<20 sec) per question (speeder). On the other hand, there was a considerable number of respondents who took more than 80 sec to answer the survey question (slow respondents).



Does speeding affect the quality of the research? In Fig. 2, the responses of speeders vs. normal and slow respondent are contrasted for two survey questions. Interestingly (or disturbingly), speeders reported that 21% of their critical high-risk patients do **not** get any medical treatment at all! From a medical perspective, this seems highly unlikely and is in sharp contrast to what normal and slow respondents reported (6 and 5%). Furthermore, when asked about the utilization of a new product, there was a marked difference in response between the three groups of respondents. Speeders are less receptive to a new product than respondents who took more time to answer the survey question. Is there a reason for that? We can only speculate, but it seems that qualified answers do require a bit of reasoning and time – time that speeders simply do not have.

The bottom line: Speeders are everywhere, although their contribution in our survey targeting medical experts was not as pronounced as reported for consumer surveys. However, speeders do not just simply add noise. In survey questions about treatment options, for example, the responses of speeders are to a large extent beyond medical reasoning! It is therefore essential to eliminate speeder's responses from the overall results. We typically define a cut-off time to eliminate speeder in order to obtain results that are not affected by questionable answers from respondents that rush through the survey without taking enough time for a qualified answer.