



Need a Lyft? Additional Research Participant Transportation Options in the Era of Rideshare Apps

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Description of the Problem

There are numerous barriers which perpetuate the exclusion of older adults in research. Two examples are transportation and mobility difficulties.

Transportation can also be a barrier for low income participants, participants who need to travel farther distances to the study site, and those who do not have access to a car. Site accessibility can further exacerbate the problem. If the study site is hard to find, or if parking is difficult and public transit not easily accessible, participants may be less likely to enroll.

These barriers limit recruitment numbers and the study population, as participants who cannot provide their own transportation are excluded from the sample. Our lab needed a solution that was efficient, reliable, and convenient for participants as well as straightforward for study staff to arrange.

Solutions Considered

Researchers can mitigate some of these issues by sending a map with directions, offering bus tickets, or providing parking reimbursement. However, these solutions do not address cases where driving or public transit are not options. Other transit options we considered include:

Transit Option	Drawbacks
Local Taxi Vouchers	Costly & time-consuming to implement
Hopelink	For medical appointments only
Access/Hyde Shuttle	Time-consuming for patient
Uber for Business	No customer service line, Technical issues with site, Additional service fee

Best Practice:

Our lab proposes the use of web-based rideshare services, such as Lyft Concierge, as another transportation option for research participants in order to:

- ▶ Improve subject recruitment & retention
- ▶ Increase accessibility to services
- ▶ Demonstrate commitment to inclusivity within research



Methods

- ▶ Set up an account linked to your organization, including a card linked to the study budgets
- ▶ Add dispatchers to the account
- ▶ To create a new ride request:
 - ▶ Identify pick-up/drop-off locations
 - ▶ Include study name in note so info is included on the receipt
- ▶ Participants receive texts with details about the driver, car, and estimated arrival time
- ▶ Staff are able to monitor the rides through the site

Outcomes

Our lab has used Lyft for 14 months. We have provided 67 rides for 7 participants across 2 research studies. We have primarily received positive feedback from participants and believe this practice has been helpful for retention. Additional benefits we have found by using this service include:

- ▶ Allowing study staff to provide transportation to participants without the use of a smartphone
- ▶ Ability to monitor current and past rides
- ▶ Streamlining the budget approval process, as receipts can be emailed directly to budgeting team
- ▶ New flexible scheduling feature allows participants to call for their ride when they are ready within a 24 hour window.

Limitations

Important factors to consider:

- ▶ Cost
- ▶ Reliability
- ▶ Accessible pick-up & drop-off areas at study site
- ▶ Participant familiarity & comfortability with rideshare services

Lessons Learned

- ▶ It's important to emphasize to participants that they need to be waiting outside and visible when the Lyft arrives and to be looking carefully for the car.
- ▶ "Note for Driver" field in the ride request form can be used to provide information to the driver, e.g. the participant uses a walker and may take longer than usual to get in the car.
- ▶ If there is any kind of issue at pick up, or miscommunication about location, the research staff and participants are able to call the driver directly.

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