Survey research methods are employed with increasing frequency in neuropsychological studies. The increase in their popularity is likely attributable to the development of user-friendly software for Web surveys that potentially lowers survey costs. The purpose of the present study was to create recommended guidelines for neuropsychologists in accordance with best practices used in survey research design and data reporting.

We conducted a literature review and found 50 neuropsychological studies, published in peer reviewed journals, that utilized survey methodology. Surveys in this sample dated back to the early 1980's and were administered to different populations of interest: neuropsychologists, patients, and the general population. It is difficult to judge the quality of any published survey without detailed information on the methods used, and replication, a key facet in any scientific research field, relies on sufficient disclosure of methodological design and procedures. Drawing on guidelines published by the American Association for Public Opinion Research, each study in the sample was assigned a disclosure compliance score. The scores account for differences in survey design across studies, as they represent the proportion of elements that each survey disclosed relative to the number of elements that ought to be disclosed for that individual survey, based on its study design.

Overall, disclosure compliance scores were widely variable (29% to 93%) and represented fair to good compliance (M = 63%). Studies published from 2010 through 2016 had higher compliance rates (n=14, M=70%) than studies published from 2000 through 2009 (n=20, M=67%). Studies published before 2000 had the lowest rate of disclosure compliance (n=16, M=57%). These results indicate that there have been improvements over time. However, it is still clear that several areas remain in need of improvement, as certain elements of survey design appear to have consistently higher rates of disclosure across time (definition of population, M = 90%) than others (dates of data collection, M = 22%).

We recommend the following: researchers should report how their survey minimizes the four primary sources of error (coverage error, sampling error, non-response error, measurement error), use probability-based sampling methods, and provide detailed disclosure regarding the methodology used. These steps enable readers to assess accurately both the quality of survey and the possible presence of threats to reliability and validity. A rubric, created with these recommended guidelines as a basis, is intended to provide neuropsychologists with an easily accessible tool to ensure sufficient disclosure of the survey research methods used. Additionally, the rubric is intended to serve as a checklist for assessing survey quality, to be used by future reviewers and readers of survey research articles. Thus, it is anticipated that this rubric will serve as an additional resource to help further improve the quality of survey research in neuropsychology.