



NOTICES

Some findings from the reader survey



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The 2004/2005 Reader Survey for the *Community Eye Health Journal (CEHJ)* provided us with a wealth of information about our readers, their opinions about the journal's usefulness and relevance, and suggestions for improvement.

comes after four months. The results are an eye opener. We have encouraged others to this too. You can use the results to audit your work. It's great!
Ophthalmic nurse. Zimbabwe

We now have a better understanding of patients' difficulties. We try to recognise their needs and try to communicate and cooperate with them at a deeper level. We give the visually impaired more time to explain themselves and we take time to explain to them in greater detail.
Nurse. Cameroon

Forty one per cent of readers report using the journal for teaching a wide range of audiences in different settings, and describe how they translate the articles into other languages and different media for presentations.

I make photocopies of different articles and distribute among the students when I deliver any subject. I also... photocopy onto transparent sheets for OHP.
Ophthalmologist. Bangladesh

Showing community health workers photos of eye diseases so that they can know which cases have to be referred to the rural health centres and which ones have to go to hospital.
Ophthalmic assistant. Zambia

We laminated the different pictures of retina to use on explaining to patients the proliferative changes in Diabetic and Hypertensive Pathology.
Ophthalmic nurse. South Africa

During outreach we use the journal to teach the community; with pictures the community is able to understand. In the clinic the patients also understand more with the pictures and the message is carried across.
Ophthalmologist. Kenya

How can CEHJ be further improved?

In response to the sentence completion: "The journal could be improved if...", respondents suggested improving:

- the quality of the journal, including attention to different themes, and continued improvement in the format and use of graphics
- the reach/distribution of the journal, including other translations
- the usability of journal material by expanding into a wider range of media, such as CD-ROM, composite print versions, other teaching materials such as posters, videos, and distance learning courses with accreditation
- information about courses, jobs and training.

Readers' suggestions have been presented at editorial committee meetings and provide a valuable resource to the editorial team. Already many of your suggestions have been acted upon. Many thanks to all readers who took the time to return the questionnaires! A full report of the reader survey will be available on the ICEH website in May 2006.

What do readers like about CEHJ?

Ninety seven per cent of readers report finding the journal very useful or useful. The top four types of material described as "very useful" were ranked as: articles on the theme for the issue, Evidence-based Eye Care Series, the Technology Series and original research.

The following quotes reflect something of the diversity of comments about what readers like about CEHJ.

It helps me to upgrade myself. It helps me to understand certain eye conditions well, and their management. It helps me to know what is going on in the other countries ...and the interventions they are taking.

Ophthalmic nurse. Ghana

The study of ophthalmic assistants course helped me to get a job, but study of Community Eye Health Journal improved my knowledge and my responsibility in the field of prevention of blindness.

Ophthalmic assistant. India

...it is teaching by itself without teachers...

Teacher. Ethiopia

Very easy to read and it is like a mirror to us, we see ourselves in the journal hence it increases my confidence and gives me hope to continue to work successfully.

Ophthalmologist. Ghana

...it encourages me to reach out to the low income-earners and less privileged in the society.

Optometrist. Nigeria

...it is sent to people living in developing countries free of charge. For this reason many poor people like some of the us are able to have it.

Optical technician. Cameroon

Does CEHJ change the way readers practice eye care?

In response to the question "Has any article in the journal helped you to change your practice?" 72 per cent (n = 1,235) answered 'yes', with 84 per cent of these (n = 1,040) providing descriptions of how their knowledge, attitudes and practice have changed as a result of reading the journal, for example:

Some of the articles have 'touched' me in several ways. They teach you to evaluate the community as a whole, not just the individual. Also to do a better analysis of the situations. They also give examples that sometimes can be applied in your region.

Ophthalmologist. Colombia

I have now tended to make small corneo-scleral incisions during cataract surgery. I have found it better than the previous large incisions which caused complications like iris prolapse.

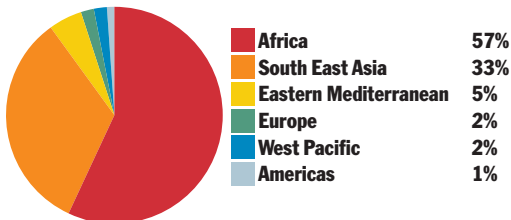
Cataract surgeon. Uganda

After reading the article on the importance of monitoring cataract surgical outcomes, we introduced cataract cards and monitor the vision of each cataract-operated patients on day one, two weeks and six weeks. If the patient can, he or she

Who responded?

1,704 readers from 84 countries returned the questionnaire within the required time. Figure 1 provides a picture of the regional breakdown of respondents and highlights the fact that the greatest proportion of returns came from Africa, which also provided the best response rate at 13 per cent.

Figure 1. Regions represented in the survey



Who are our readers?

Jobs and level of service provision

Sixty per cent of our readers have specialist ophthalmic training, of which 23 per cent are ophthalmologists and 37 per cent are mid-level eye workers. This mid-level group has increased by 17 per cent since the last survey in 1997.

Figure 2. Range of professions

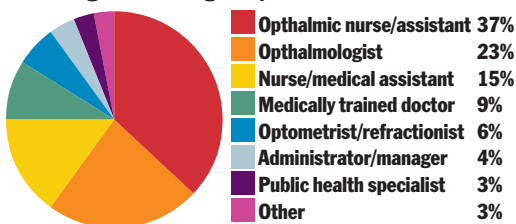
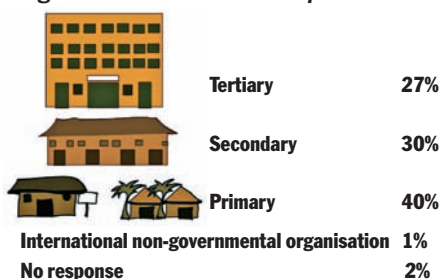


Figure 3. Levels at which respondents work



Languages used by respondents

Eighty three per cent of respondents include English in their list of working languages. Of these, 25 per cent use English exclusively, while 58 per cent use it with one or more other local languages – 165 different languages are mentioned, the most common of which are Kiswahili, Hausa, Hindi, Kannada, Amharic, French, Gujarati, Ibo, Malayalam, Urdu and Yoruba.

Access to the internet

There has been a notable change since the 1997 survey, when just over 20 per cent of the readership had access to the internet, compared to the overall total of 51 per cent in the recent survey. Of those who do have access, 24.3 per cent rely on internet cafés.