Survey on Readership of Professional Journals among Malaysian Dentists  
Part II. Readership of the Malaysian Dental Journal

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ABSTRACT
The objective of this part of the study was to understand the current trend on readership of the Malaysian Dental Journal (MDJ) among Malaysian dentists. Their views on the contents and quality of the Malaysian Dental Journal were enquired. We also enquired the reasons they chose-to/chose-not-to read the MDJ. Of the 225 dentists surveyed, the number of MDJ readers was 101; with only 24.75% reading all issues published. The editorial section was rated as “useful” by 70.3% of readers, while 79.2%, 87.1%, 87.1% and 80.2% of readers rated the research article section, the review article section, the case reports section and book recommendation section similarly respectively. Feedback from readers indicated that they wanted more case reports, more review articles on “how to do it” and on medical problems in dentistry. More than half (55.45%) of the MDJ readers preferred to receive the journal in both hard and soft copies. For the non-readers, the most common reasons cited for not reading the MDJ was not being able to access to the journal, followed by not having time to read. Our finding suggested that the respondents preferred to learn from colleagues’ experience and to read article that can improve their clinical knowledge and skill.

Key words: continuing professional education, journal, readership, Asia

INTRODUCTION

The Malaysian Dental Journal (MDJ) is a publication of the Malaysian Dental Association (MDA) and is published twice yearly. It provides a means for continuing professional development/education (CPD/CPE) due to the nature of its content. Other means of CPD available in this country include seminars, workshops, conferences, journal club discussions and ward rounds.

This report details the finding of a readership survey of the MDJ, undertaken between February and July 2006. The reason this survey was undertaken was to bridge the gap between the publisher (MDA) and the readers, so that the readers may voice their opinions on the quality and what they expect from the journal. Unless a journal arouses criticism, it hardly achieves the objects for which it is published.1 With statements like this more and more journal are doing readership surveys to get more positive feedback and criticism from their readers.

In the United Kingdom, the British Dental Journal (BDJ) is the most popular journal when compared to its counterparts. Even so, the BDJ has been undertaking readership survey continuously since 1992 to get feedback from its readers in order to improve itself and for making sure the reader's needs are met.2-4

In Malaysia, even though the MDJ has been published for more than three decades, no readership survey has been undertaken. The authors are of the opinion that such an exercise is inevitable as dental technology and needs of dentists have changed tremendously since its inaugural issue as the former Dental Journal of Malaysia in 1974. Hence, this exercise of getting feedback from readers was done to obtain their views on the content and quality of the MDJ and what they wish in future issues.