Perception of a Newsletter for Community Pharmacists

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Introduction

*Keeping Abreast* is a newsletter published in order to emphasize the importance of pharmacists keeping up to date with advances in medicine and providing patient advice.

Aims

- To formulate and distribute a bimonthly newsletter to all local community pharmacies.
- To investigate any preferences between the different newsletter issues and their content.

Method

- Literature review and data collection was done to research the project and to compile the newsletter articles which were then reviewed by a specialist.
- The design format and layout of the newsletter was done using Microsoft Office Publisher 2007 and the publication was titled *Keeping Abreast*.
- Validity testing and proof reading of the newsletter in regards to language, content, readability, presentation and layout was done by a focus group.
- Five newsletter issues were published and distributed to pharmacists in 208 local community pharmacies (N=1040) by post along with a covering letter, a questionnaire for data evaluation and a self addressed envelope.
- Data was collected by post. The results of the questionnaire were inputted into SPSS version 19.0 and coded with respect to age, gender, design and layout of the newsletter, article content, preferred article and language.

Various local companies were contacted by post or email to find a sponsor for the project.

Results

Response rate was 64.3% (71% of respondents being female as was expected, since Hili (2009) showed that from the 30.2% of pharmacists who practice in community pharmacies 70.8% were female).

Pharmacists agreed that the newsletter layout was attractive (97%, 652) and professional (97%, 649), the font was clear (95%, 639) and of adequate size (97%, 647). The articles were found to be interesting (98%, 653), informative (97%, 649), useful (95%, 634) and well written (95%, 633). Pharmacists agreed that article length should not be longer (83%, 556) or shorter (84%, 559). English was the preferred language (99.8%, 668). Unprompted 11 pharmacists suggested that more articles should be included and 4 requested more issues of the newsletter.

![Figure 1 - Comparison of the mean rating score elicited for the design and layout of the newsletter depicting high scores in all aspects.](image1)

The two-way ANOVA test showed that pharmacists rated all newsletter aspects equally but discriminated between different issues. With regards to the Design and Layout of the questionnaire the pharmacists rated all the aspects equally as the p value was greater than 0.05. With respect to article content they discriminated between the different aspects, rating some aspects higher than others, as the p value was less than 0.05. In both sections the pharmacists rated some newsletter issues higher than others as the p values were less than 0.05.

![Figure 2 - Comparison of the mean rating score elicited for article content of the newsletter depicting high scores for the first four and low scores for the last two aspects. Hence pharmacists approved of the article length.](image2)

Conclusion

The results show that such a publication is welcomed in community pharmacies and that it is appreciated as an easy way to keep abreast with current developments and local pharmacy issues. The discrimination between the different issues may due to different pharmacists answering questionnaires of different newsletter issues.

The limitations of this study were community pharmacist participation, problems with distributing and collecting all the questionnaires by hand and furthermore the number of issues is limited by time and financial constraints. For further study the newsletter should be published as an online blog format which is free, easily accessible and updated.

References