

INTRODUCTION

External communication enables the transmission of information amongst individuals within society which is essential for survival¹. E-newsletters can be described as peer reviewed periodicals focusing on few select topics and distributed via electronic means². A well written and well designed e-newsletter is a valuable tool used to share information amongst people with common interests and needs³.

AIMS

- To compile and design an interactive e-newsletter reporting events organized or hosted by the Department of Pharmacy at the University of Malta.
- To distribute the e-newsletter to pharmacists, pharmacy department students and staff members.
- To evaluate the content, presentation and means of dissemination of the e-newsletter.

METHOD

1. The study carried out by Rossi¹ in 2002, Vella⁴ in 2010 and past issue of the pharmacy department newsletter were reviewed.
2. The editor attended events and contacted people to collect information used to compile articles and interviews.
3. A consent form and questionnaire were developed for the focus group.
4. The focus group reviewed the e-newsletter and questionnaire developed for readers.

5. A directory of pharmacists was compiled; the pharmacy council was contacted to help in dissemination amongst pharmacists and the faculty officer at the pharmacy department was contacted to help in dissemination among the student body and members of staff.
6. Dissemination to all pharmacists and pharmacy students was undertaken electronically.
7. The results of the evaluation questionnaire were collected and analyzed using IBM SPSS Version 21 and Microsoft Excel 2007.

RESULTS

The evaluation questionnaire was sent to 725 pharmacists, 176 students and 27 department staff members. The evaluation questionnaire was completed by 215 (29.65%) pharmacists, 47 (26.70%) students and 13 (48.15%) staff members making up a total of 268 (28.88%) responses. 181 (67.54%) respondents were females and 87 (32.46%) were males with ages ranging from 18 years to 76 years. The mean rating scores obtained from the Likert Scale (1 strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree) show that the readers perceived the e-newsletter as informative (2.37), easy to comprehend (1.97), adequately illustrated (2.25) and of the right length (2.15). The e-newsletter was regarded as an effective means of communication (2.29) with an adequate means of distribution (91.79% of respondents).

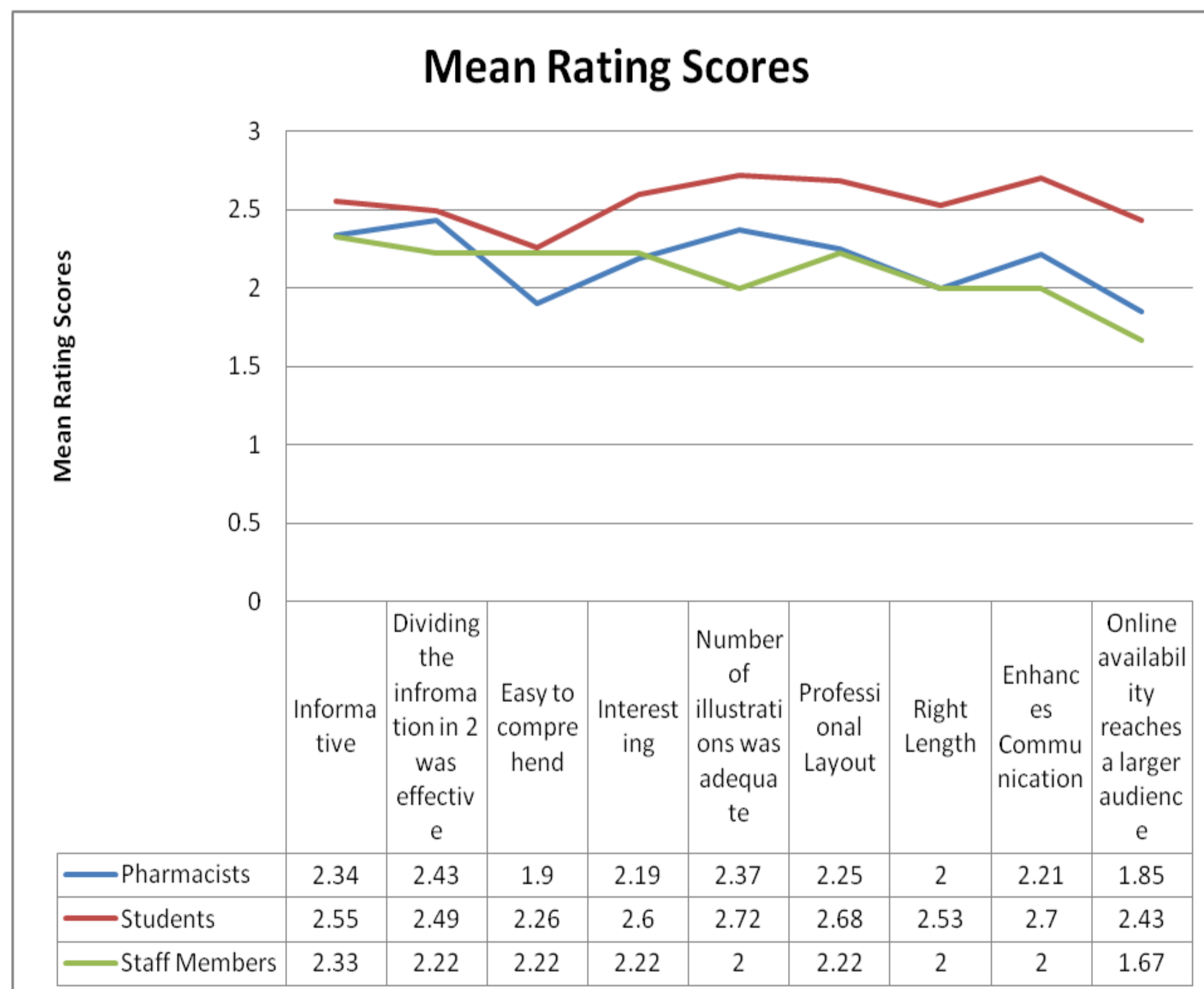


Figure 1: Mean rating scores categorized according to respondents' occupation

CONCLUSION

The Pharmacy Department e-newsletter acted as a link between the Department of Pharmacy and the targeted audience. The content was interesting and informative for respondents working in different environments and the elimination of printing made the publication environment friendly which was noted by readers.

References

1. Rossi B. The production and evaluation of a pharmacy department newsletter [project]. Msida (Malta): Department of Pharmacy, University of Malta; 2002.
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3. Eckermann SL, McIntyre E, Magarey A. Producing newsletters criteria for success. RACPG [serial online] 2007 Jan-Feb [cited 2012 Feb 2]; 38(1/2):74-75. Available from: <http://www.racgp.org.au/afp/200701/20070129ekerman.pdf>
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