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## SUPPORT FOR INCREASED LAY REPRESENTATION

About 4 per cent of members of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society responded to the survey distributed with *The Journal* of 29 June dealing with a range of issues covering the future structure of the Council. By the end of last week, 1,760 completed surveys had been returned out of a total membership of over 44,000 — and they are still coming in.

Although this figure does not compare with last week's response to *Big Brother*, it is a good response in market research terms. Only for surveys where there is a financial reward for filling them in or a direct benefit to an individual would responses be expected to be in excess of 5 per cent.

So, what do the replies tell us about the mood among pharmacists? Surprisingly, considering the noise made by certain parties, a clear majority of respondents are not concerned about the prospect of the Council containing many more lay members than at present — provided pharmacists stay in the majority (see p175).

In fact, 43 per cent of respondents indicated that a Council constituted with a maximum of 60 per cent of pharmacists is acceptable, and a further 9 per cent would accept a doubling of the current number of lay members from three to six. However, there was some support for the model suggested by the Young Pharmacists Group (*Pfj*, 29 June, p906): 28 per cent of respondents either explicitly mentioned the YPG model or indicated that they would like to see the Society run by a Council peopled only by pharmacists.

The Modernisation Steering Group, which is convinced that the future for the Society lies in increasing lay representation on the Council, will be reassured by the overall result. Nevertheless, its members must not overlook the fact that more than a quarter of the profession has not yet bought into their agenda, as suggested by our survey. Convincing these pharmacists that, by being in the best interests of the public, increasing lay representation on the Council is in the best interests of the profession too, may well turn out to be an uphill struggle; and, of course, there will be some who will never be convinced.

Members of the Modernisation Steering Group will have to continue to explain the issues and spell out the consequences if they wish to carry an even larger majority of the profession forward with them.