

Who reads this journal? (and what do they think about it?)

By **Hannah Pike**, MRPharmS and **Gareth Malson**, MRPharmS

Feedback from readers is important for every publication. Nearly 600 readers completed the readership survey that was sent out with the May issue of *Hospital Pharmacist*. The responses have now been analysed and are described in this article



Hospital Pharmacist periodically asks readers to give their opinions on the journal and to make suggestions for improvement. Nearly 600 readers (about 6 per cent of the readership) completed the recent survey, and overall, responses were positive. However, we acknowledge that a limitation of this survey is that respondents were self-selecting. Views are therefore more likely to represent the opinion of *Hospital Pharmacist's* more regular readers who are happy to engage with the journal.

The analysis

Following a total count of responses received by the closing date, a sample of 100 responses were randomly selected from each age group (apart from in the 61+ group, from whom we only received 43 submissions). The samples were analysed in detail. General comments, suggestions and feedback were extracted from all forms.

Who reads it?

In total 553 responses were sent in by post and 33 were submitted via *PJ Online*. Responses received from each age group, and by job grade are shown in Panel 1.

Publications that readers reported looking at on a regular basis are shown in Figure 1 (p271). Approximately half of all respondents said that they read "all" of *The Pharmaceutical*

Journal and *Hospital Pharmacist*, although readers aged 21–30 tended to read more of *Hospital Pharmacist* than *The Pharmaceutical Journal*.

Hospital Pharmacist was rated the "most relevant" and "most interesting" journal by all age groups, when compared with *BMJ*, *The Pharmaceutical Journal*, *Pharmacy in Practice* and *Prescriber*. *The Pharmaceutical Journal* was considered to be the "most authoritative" journal, followed by *BMJ* (mainly because of its popularity with middle-aged readers).

Hospital Pharmacist was rated the "most useful" journal by all age groups apart from the over 61s, who voted for *The Pharmaceutical Journal* in this category.

What do they read?

Special features Special features were reported to be the most widely read section in *Hospital Pharmacist* across all age groups, followed by news and articles. On average, three quarters of respondents attempt the Life-long Learning questions, with just under half sending them in for marking. There were several requests for the facility to answer the Life-long Learning questions via *PJ Online*, and this is something the journal hopes to set up in the future.

The majority of respondents said they prefer to read special features that cover clinical topics rather than those covering other subjects (eg procurement and medical statistics), although more interest in other subjects was shown by those aged over 46. Panel 2 (p271) lists some readers' comments about the special features.

News The majority of our readers "always" or "usually" read the news pages. A monthly journal is not an ideal forum for news, given the time between *Hospital Pharmacist* being printed and it reaching the readers,

Panel 1: Age and grade of readers responding to the survey

Age group	No of responses
21–30	102
31–45	267
46–60	174
61+	43

AfC band (where known)	No of responses
6	44
7	47
8a	76
8b	44
8c	23
8d	14
9	4

Whitley Council grade	No of responses
A	1
B	6
C	14
D	32
E	26
F	8
G	0
H	3

Hannah Pike is editor and **Gareth Malson** is staff editor at *Hospital Pharmacist*

but we aim to provide a digest of the month's developments. To complement this we have recently introduced the "Research update" page, highlighting the latest findings from international journals and other sources.

Technician articles Only 49 respondents "always" or "sometimes" read the "Focus on technician" articles. In total 104 respondents "sometimes" read them, and 156 "rarely" or "never" read them. It may be that few pharmacists are directly involved in developing the role of technicians, so do not see the relevance of these articles. We will keep this under review.

Other sections Meeting reports and original papers were the least regularly read of all the sections in *Hospital Pharmacist*. Meeting reports inherently present the latest thinking from specialist groups, so it follows that they will appeal to a more narrow readership. However, the same could be said for original papers, so it is encouraging that most readers "usually" or "sometimes" read these.

Reader requests

When asked what they would like to see in *Hospital Pharmacist*, reader responses were similar for all age groups (see Figure 2). In general, readers would like to see more

Panel 2: Reader comments about special features

- "As a semi-retired pharmacist locum living in the US for part of the year, *Hospital Pharmacist* CPD articles are invaluable. Thank you." (61 plus)
- "Useful for diploma pharmacists to improve clinical knowledge" (31-45)
- "Some of the Life-long Learning series applies equally (if not more) to community/primary care practice. It would be good to reference these in the PJ as ... this series could benefit a wider readership." (31-45)
- "I like the broadness of the clinical subject areas — helps me keep my generalist role up to date." (31-45)
- "I am afraid the UKCPA and NEJM e-mail updates [are more] authoritative [and relevant for] clinical/managerial aspects. I would then go to the relevant primary reference sources for more detail." (31-45)
- "*Hospital Pharmacist* is an excellent publication and the continuing education articles are particularly relevant." (46-60)

clinical case studies, articles on common drug errors and new drug profiles. *Hospital Pharmacist* does publish case studies, although these are rarely submitted. Readers are encouraged to contact the editorial office if they would like to contribute articles on any such work.

A few readers expressed concerns for the environment in receiving a hard copy of *Hospital Pharmacist* and prefer to read it online, and one reader was concerned about the waste caused by plastic wrappers. Since June the journal has been delivered in biodegradable polywrap.

Conclusion

Survey results show that *Hospital Pharmacist* continues to be highly valued by its readers. Readers' views will be taken into consideration for future plans to develop the journal. *Hospital Pharmacist* would like to thank all those who responded to the survey.

Readers are reminded that the quality of *Hospital Pharmacist* relies heavily on the articles submitted for publication. For advice on submitting articles, papers or meeting reports please contact Hannah Pike (telephone 0207 572 2425). Readers are also invited to submit 900 word letters or editorials on any topic they wish to debate.

Panel 3: Reader comments about *Hospital Pharmacist*

- "A very readable publication — just about the right size and pitch of content" (46-60)
- *Hospital Pharmacist* should have an amusing anecdote page similar to the one at the back of *Prescriber*" (21-30)
- "Keep up the high standards of the publication" (46-60)
- "*Hospital Pharmacist* is much more relevant to me than anything in the *The Pharmaceutical Journal* — I would rather get *Hospital Pharmacist* weekly and *The Pharmaceutical Journal* monthly" (21-30)
- "Monthly issues make sure each journal is relevant and remains an interesting read — a great example of quality rather than quantity" (21-30)
- "Excellent that it is online too as I can fit in articles at lunchtime in a busy working environment" (31-45)
- "I like the current layout of the journal" (21-30)
- "Even if I don't have time to read it, I always try to flick through it and do a resumé" (46-60)

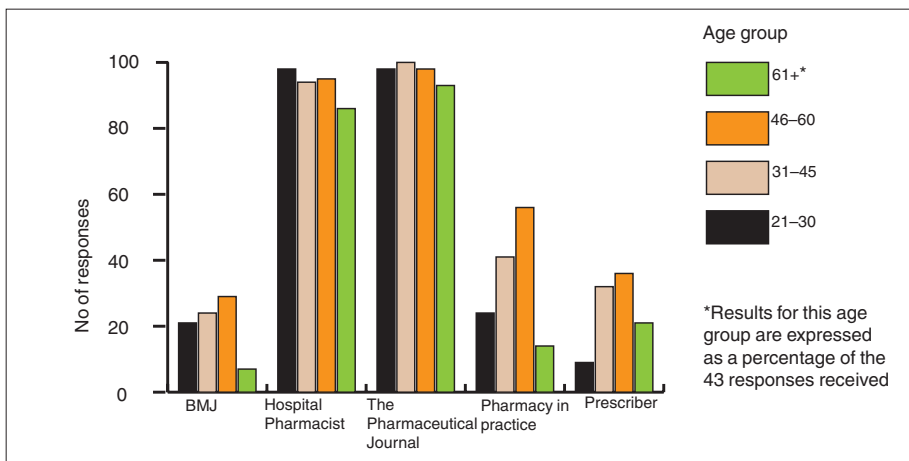


Figure 1: Responses to "Which publications do you look at on a regular basis?"

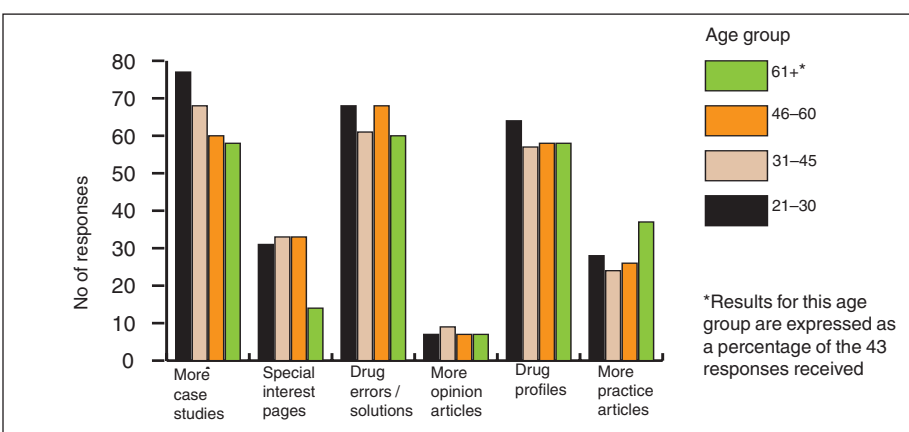


Figure 2: Responses to "Which of the following would you like to see in *Hospital Pharmacist*?"