Author's response to reviews

Title: The information sources and journals consulted or read by UK paediatricians to inform their clinical practice and those which they consider important: a questionnaire survey.

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Author's response to reviews:

Authors’ response to reviewers’ comments

General comments:
The authors would like to thank the reviewers for spending their time studying this paper and for their helpful and constructive comments that have led to this amended version.

1. Rowena J Cullen

Minor essential revisions:
Tables and Figures - These have been revised to address the suggestions of both reviewers (some of the revisions are to meet the other reviewer's points) and also reduced in number. The original Table 1 has been removed and replaced with the complete questionnaire, as distributed to paediatricians, attached as an Additional file. Table 2 (now Table 1) has been simplified and the deleted details have been included in the text. Table 3 has been deleted and the information included in the text. Table 4 has been simplified and re-arranged (now Table 2). Tables 5 and 7 contain further readership data and have been combined, adjusted to improve interpretation and explanatory notes have been corrected (Now Table 3). Table 6 (now Table 4) contains data on the importance of individual journals and has been slightly adjusted to improve readability. Figure 1 has been removed as the data are contained in the text and Table 4. Figure 2 has been adjusted so that all labels on the x-axis show up (Now Figure 1). Figures 3 and 4 have been combined and again labels on the x-axis have been improved (Now Figure 2). Figure 5 remains unchanged but has been renamed Figure 3.

References have been checked and corrected as appropriate.

Discretionary revisions:
The text of the paper has been revised, in particular many of the sections have been reduced in length, the content has been clarified and details of the significant variations found in the data analysis have been added.

Reviewer 2: Andrew Riordan

Major Compulsory Revisions:
1. The aim of the research has been added to the Background section of the Abstract and clarified in the Background of the main paper. The questionnaire, as presented to paediatricians in the survey, has been included in the paper as an Additional file so that readers are aware of the questions actually put to the paediatricians.
2. The authors agree with Dr Riordan that the availability of the journals will affect access. We discuss the issue of availability and nationality of the journals especially in the context of membership of the Royal College and societies in the Discussion section of the paper but this is a complex issue that requires extensive research. Our work included the examination of a snapshot situation covering as many paediatricians in the UK specialty as possible to see what journals they read and consider important to their clinical practice compared to those identified previously as containing 'best evidence'. When constructing this non-clinical questionnaire we were conscious of the potential barriers to a good response rate from clinicians within a busy specialty and endeavoured to keep it as brief as possible, whilst covering the area
we were particularly interested in. Continued research into the reasons behind their choices of journals (and
indeed all information sources) such as availability and how this situation could be improved would be very
interesting. Nevertheless, we are able to combine the evidence from Riordan et al on availability with our
own data to show that readership of the key 7 journals varies much more than availability.

3. Question 6 on the questionnaire asks the respondents about readership of journals but we have not
stated any of the many definitions of the term ‘read’. We allowed the respondent to interpret this term in
his/her own way but we specify ‘...on a regular basis to inform your clinical practice.’ We have asked them
also to rank those most important to their clinical practice. The differences in responses to these two parts
of the question allow us to draw comparisons between journals that may be only quickly scanned, albeit
regularly, and those that are viewed as being more important. We used similar wording for Question 5
concerning the information sources ‘consulted or attended’ and ‘their importance’ to the respondents’ clinical
practice, to make the same distinction.

4. & 5. The paper has been edited and considerably reduced in length and the Conclusions sections in the
Abstract and the main text have been adjusted as requested to remove any ambiguity.

6. The data analysis has been extended to include details of the significant variations found and these
findings have been included in the Results section. A chi2 test was carried out on the data and the results
found were

- **Academic vs Non-academic** $\chi^2 = 70.43$
- **Consultants vs NCCGs** $\chi^2 = 97.85$
- **Community-based consultants vs Hospital-based consultants** $\chi^2 = 56.55$

In each of the three comparisons there were 9 degrees of freedom, yielding a critical value of $\chi^2 = 16.92$ at
the 95% level.

Hence the null hypothesis is rejected in each case and we conclude that the number of journals read
depends on the characteristics of the respondent paediatrician.

Minor essential revisions:

1. The impact factor for Pediatric Research has been checked and was 3.1 as stated in the Table (now
   Table 3). The historical profile since 1999 shows a high point of 3.4 in 2002. As mentioned in the Discussion
the impact factors of paediatric journals are relatively low in comparison to many other disciplines and even
an impact factor of 3.1 is high for the specialty, putting the journal in 4th position in 2003 out of 68 journals.

2. - 6. Tables and Figures - These have been revised as suggested and also reduced in number. The
original Table 1 has been removed and replaced with the complete questionnaire, as distributed to
paediatricians, attached as an Additional file. Table 2 (now Table 1) has been simplified and the deleted
details have been included in the text. Table 3 has been deleted and the information included in the text.
Table 4 has been simplified and re-arranged (now Table 2). Tables 5 and 7 contain further readership data
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slightly adjusted to improve readability. Figure 1 has been removed as the data are contained in the text anc
Table 4. Figure 2 has been adjusted so that all labels on the x-axis show up (Now Figure 1). Figures 3 and 4
have been combined, though maintained as a figure, and again labels on the x-axis have been improved
(Now Figure 2). Figure 5 remains unchanged but has been renamed Figure 3.

7. We thank the reviewer for highlighting the context in which his paper is indeed most relevant for our
paper, i.e. it provides valuable information on the availability of various information sources in specialist
paediatric and neonatal units as well as their use in an on-call situation and demonstrates the differences
between 'availability' and 'use' of a resource. It also further illustrates the complexity surrounding the
availability and access of information sources: the study involved paediatricians' practice whilst on-call and
compares with the more general situation that exists through the paediatricians' working week. Whilst those
interviewed were predominantly trainees, we have referred to Riordan et al's findings and made
comparisons with those from our survey.