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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Responses to the Reviewer’s comments

The authors thank Dr Riordan for his comments. The paper has been considerably adjusted as requested with substantial amounts of data removed. The paper now includes fewer issues from the questionnaire survey yet more detailed analysis of these issues providing greater focus. Overall, the length of the article has been reduced.

In reply to Dr Riordan’s individual points:

Major compulsory revisions

1. The paper has been further reduced in length and amended as suggested. Between them, the authors have experience of writing papers for medical journals, including paediatric journals.
2. The study is explicitly not only about the sources of information but also the individual journals that paediatricians consult, hence the detail about journals in the Background section (see also questionnaire in the Appendix). Nevertheless, some of the content concerning journals has been reduced better to reflect the balance between the two parts and, for similar reasons, details discussing journal impact factors have been removed.
3. Table 2 has been reduced in size and Tables 3 and 4 have been removed. The major findings have been highlighted in the text of the results section and the statistical comparison has been extended to include the information sources considered first in importance by the different groups of paediatricians.
4. &5. The Discussion section has been reduced in length as suggested. The Conclusions section has also been adjusted.
5. Table 2 has been reduced to contain only those journals that are read by 20% or more paediatricians in any one of the included groups. Whilst some of the data points are less than 20%, every journal included has at least one value that is 20% or greater. The more specialised journals read by >20% of specialists have remained in the tables as the authors consider that these are important as illustrations of the differences between groups, in particular, hospital-based and community-based paediatricians and therefore indicate the different approaches to dissemination that may be required to reach all groups. Assessing the differences between these groups was highlighted by members of the RCPCH when the survey was originally devised as essential to gain a true picture of the specialty of paediatrics.

Minor compulsory revisions

As Dr Riordan has commented, the phrase ‘consulted or attended’ could be replaced by ‘used’ which is much more fluent but the former phrase was that used in the original questionnaire and therefore describes exactly what the paediatricians were responding to.