

# ASSESSMENT OF INFORMATION NEEDS FOR IDAHO SPEECH LANGUAGE PATHOLOGISTS AND AUDIOLOGISTS

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## PURPOSE

- Present the outcomes of information needs assessment of Idaho speech language pathologists and audiologists (SLP/A).
- Identify specific needs for educational training in information resources searching and evidence-based practice.

## SETTINGS/PARTICIPANTS

- Idaho is a rural state. Of Idaho's 44 counties, 21 are classified as rural or frontier counties, and are "medically underserved".
- Idaho has a shortage of speech-language pathologists and audiologists.
- SLP/A may have little time or knowledge to search health information for their decision-making as they serve patients.
- 80.3% of SLP/A in Idaho graduated from their graduate programs before 2000.

## METHODOLOGY

- Potential participants were professionals listed in the 2005 Idaho Speech Language and Hearing Association Membership Directory.
- 217 surveys, with letters explaining the purposes, were distributed. All participants had options to return the survey: online (WebCT), email attachment, and mail.
- The survey was also distributed to interested professionals attending the 2006 annual state convention.
- Reminder emails and letters were sent three weeks later to professionals who had not returned the survey.
- Data were analyzed descriptively and statistically.

## RESULTS

- A total of 217 surveys were distributed. The total response rate was 38.71% (84/217).

Figure 1: Respondent Rate Via Different Distribution Methods

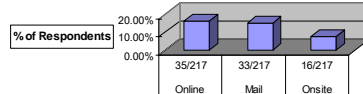


Figure 2: Locating Information Related to the Clinical Practice

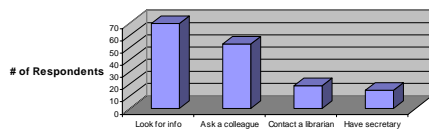


Figure 3: Knowledge and Skills in Searching Databases

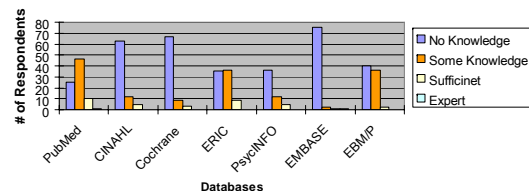
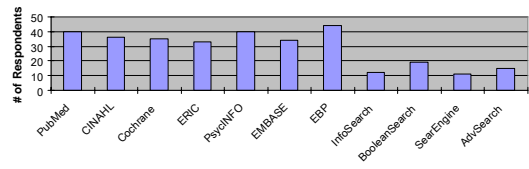


Figure 4: Interests in Receiving Training



## DISCUSSION/CONCLUSION

- The survey results indicated that the combined distribution methods increased the total response rate.
- 96.43% of SLP/A had no problem using computer and accessing the Internet. However, 86.9% of SLP/A had insufficient knowledge and skills in searching PubMed.
- 47.62% of SLP/A did not know about evidence-based practice (EBP).
- 52.38% of SLP/A were interested in learning EBP and 47.62% were interested in learning to search PubMed.

## FUTURE RESEARCH

- SLP/A need educational programs on EBP and EBP database searching.
- Given the nature of the geographic features in Idaho, developing online tutorials of how to access and search EBP resources may be necessary to reach SLP/A across the state.

## REFERENCES

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2. Bertulis, R. (2005). Survey results into the information needs of nurses and other health Professionals. Retrieved March 6, 2006, from <http://www.rcn.org.uk/news/display.php?ID=1494>

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