INTERNET-BASED MEDICAL INFORMATION RESOURCE
MARY CHERIFAN, PHARM.D.
Medical Communications Department; Ortho-McNeil Janssen Scientific Affairs, LLC., Titusville, NJ, USA

ABSTRACT
Increasing numbers of healthcare practitioners (HCPs) are using the Internet as a vital resource to search for medical information. Various pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies have created a searchable database on the Internet to allow HCPs to access medical information. The objective of this study is to evaluate the design and variances of already implemented Internet-based medical information resources. The research included two phases. A survey phase and an independent research phase. The survey phase involved distribution of an electronic survey to 50 pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies identified from The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturing of America (PhRMA) website to learn about the existence of an Internet-based medical information resource as well as its structure and design. In the independent research phase, websites of companies with an Internet-based medical information resource were further assessed to establish key features common among them. Study results will provide insight to companies that may consider offering an Internet-based medical information resource tool.

OBJECTIVE
• To evaluate how medical information departments within pharmaceutical companies are using the Internet as a tool for HCPs to access medical information.
• To evaluate the design and variances of already implemented Internet-based medical information websites.
• To provide insight to companies that may consider offering an Internet-based medical information resource tool.

METHODS
Fifty pharmaceutical and biotechnology companies were identified from The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturing of America (PhRMA) website.

1. Independent research phase
• The 50 company websites were searched to determine if companies implemented an Internet-based medical information resource.
• 7/50 company websites were searched thoroughly and evaluated to determine feature and processes common among them.
• Examples include search features, customer tools and the HCP verification process.

2. Electronic survey
• An electronic survey was sent to the 50 pharmaceutical companies identified from The Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturing of America (PhRMA) website.
• Survey questions were limited to assess full variability of different features from company to company.

RESULTS
Independent research phase
A total of 7/50 companies were evaluated.

TABLE 1 – HCP VERIFICATION

| Feature/link | # sites using feature (n=7) | % sites using feature
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call back</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat room</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Satisfaction survey/customer response | 1 | 14
| Adverse event reporting (1-800 #) | 7 | 100

FIGURE 1 – SEARCH FEATURES OFFERED AT WEBSITES

TABLE 2 – WEBSITE FEATURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th># sites using feature (n=7)</th>
<th>% sites using feature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product search</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disease state</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Information</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected letters on selected products</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company tracking</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Call back</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chat room</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction survey/customer response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 2 – THE MOST COMMON CUSTOMER TOOL LINKS

DISCLAIMERS
• Mean number of 5 dismissals per site
• Major locations of dismissals include: HCP verification site, search process and response page

FIGURE 3

Deliveries of response
• 100% (7/7) companies used Abrato PDF as the format for delivering response to HCP
• Email was not an option at any website
• 14% (1/7) sites provided prescribing information along with each medical information letter response

TABLE 3 – CONTENT OF MEDICAL INFORMATION LETTERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th># sites using feature (n=5)</th>
<th>% sites using feature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Medical</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>oreferrer</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adverse</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>events</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>response</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FIGURE 4

FIGURE 5

Beyond full text, the HCP can access medical information letters on the Internet...Companies with an Internet-based medical information resource
• 75% (3/4) of the companies plan to initiate an Internet-based medical information resource
• 80% (5/6) companies initiated resource 1-2 years ago
• 40% (2/5) companies initiated resource 2-3 years ago

Companies without an Internet-based medical information resource
• 75% (3/4) do not currently provide HCPs access to medical information letters on the Internet

FIGURE 6

LIMITATIONS
• There was a lack of survey responses from companies with an identified Internet-based medical information resource (0/7 companies responded)
• Surveys questions were limited to assess full variability of different features from company to company

CONCLUSIONS
Free companies (24%) currently have an Internet-based resource where HCPs can access medical information.
• Most companies have not implemented an Internet-based medical information resource due to regulatory and liability concerns.
• HCP registration is not required at most websites to obtain medical information and disclaimer pop up are placed on company websites for regulatory and liability concerns.
• The content of the medical information letters available on the Internet to HCPs were variable from company to company and survey questions did not assess this variability.
• Companies reported a decrease in the amount of inquiries that the company receives via other sources after initiating the Internet-based medical information resource.

The Internet-based medical information resource does provide HCPs with various other tools (links including medical information request tool, adverse event reporting tool, product information, company information, disease state education tools and ongoing company research information).

The results of the survey and independent research phase may provide direction to companies which plan in initiating an Internet-based medical information resource.

An Internet-based medical information resource may provide external HCPs with an alternate, timely and convenient method of obtaining medical information.

Customer satisfaction surveys should be implemented at all medical information websites to assess this.