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INTRODUCTION

- A 23-question electronic survey conducted in 2010 concluded that MSL managers and directors perceived that the most valuable responsibilities of MSLs are scientific exchange with key opinion leaders (KOLs) and clinical trial support.¹
- A poster assessing the value associated with oncology MSL responsibilities was presented at the Drug Information Association’s 21st Annual Workshop on Medical Communications.¹ While this poster considered the oncology field medical personnel’s perceptions of value, the perceptions of the role of the MSL among headquarters-based stakeholders was not evaluated.
- The purpose of this poster is to assess various internal groups’ (i.e. headquarters-based colleagues or stakeholders) knowledge of MSL responsibilities, and their associated value.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess headquarter-based colleagues/stakeholders understanding of various MSL roles
- To assess headquarter-based colleagues/stakeholders rating of the value of various MSL activities

METHODS

- An electronic survey was sent via Zoomerang to pharmaceutical headquarters-based employees. The Rutgers Pharmaceutical Industry Fellowships (RPIF) program alumni database was utilized to identify alumni from 2004-2010. The survey was sent to the identified contacts who were also advised to send it to their colleagues.
- Alumni of the RPIF program currently working in industry were contacted to take the survey. Current MSLs, retail pharmacists, clinical pharmacists, pharmacists working in academia full-time, residents, and alumni who are full-time students were not contacted.
- The survey was open from February 2nd to February 18th, 2011.
- Upon closing the surveys, analyses of the top five functional and therapeutic areas (by response) were included in the poster.
- The survey was anonymous and confidential. Individual names or companies were not collected.

RESULTS

Table 1: Survey Respondent Demographics (n=82)*

Department	N (%)
Medical Information	18 (22%)
Medical Affairs	26 (32%)
Business Development	1 (1%)
Field Based Representative	2 (2%)
Health Economics Outcomes Research	3 (4%)
Regulatory Affairs	10 (12%)
Pharmacovigilance	2 (2%)
Research & Development	11 (13%)
Miscellaneous†	12 (15%)
Length of Time in the Pharmaceutical Industry	
<2 years	5 (6%)
2 to 5 years	37 (45%)
6 to 10 years	20 (24%)
>10 years	20 (24%)

*Functional areas in the survey were self identified by the respondents.
†Miscellaneous includes: Marketing/Market Research (n=10), Training (n=1), and Operations (n=1).

Figure 1: Respondents’ Understanding of the MSL Role by Therapeutic Area

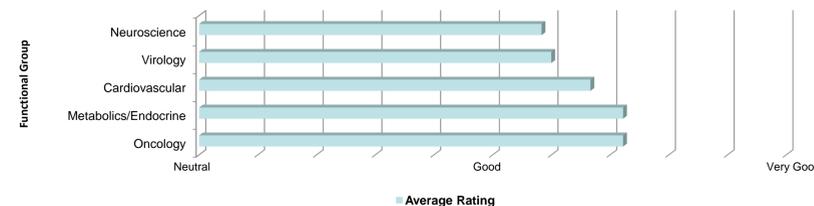


Figure 2: Respondents’ Understanding of the MSL Role by Functional Area

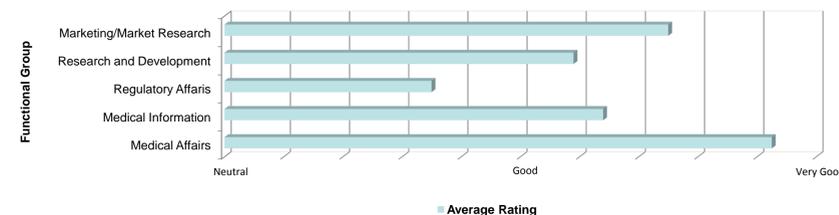


Figure 3: Functional Area Ranking of MSLs in Various Functions

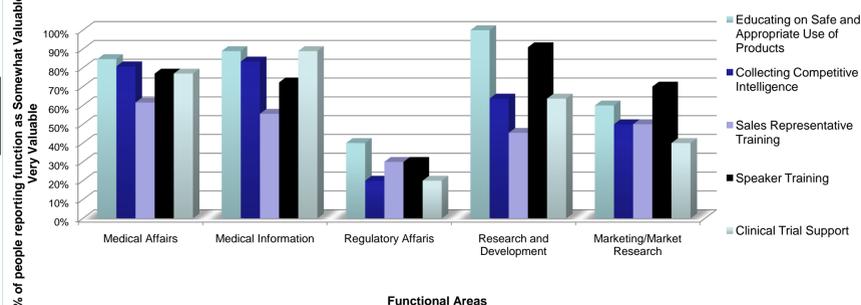


Figure 4: Therapeutic Areas Ranking of MSLs in Various Functions

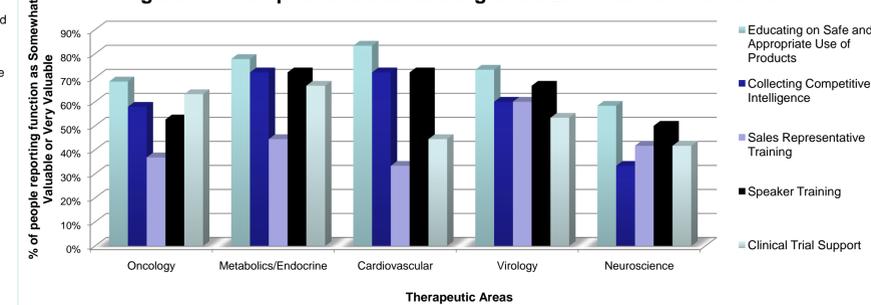


Figure 5: How Well Do MSLs Communicate Field Insights Back to Headquarters by Functional Group

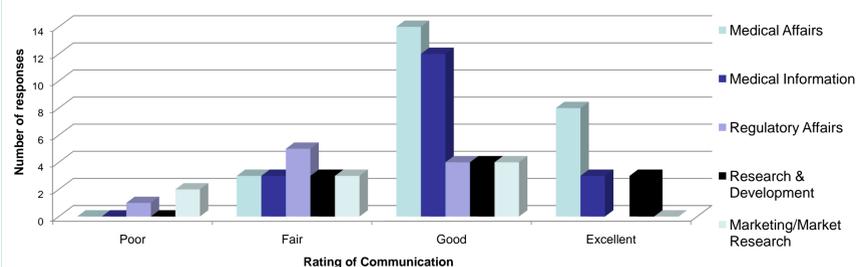
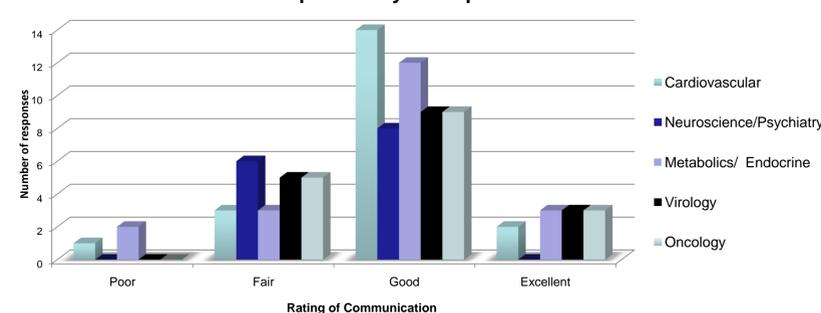


Figure 6: How Well Do MSLs Communicate Field Insights Back to Headquarters by Therapeutic Area



DISCUSSION

- Respondents emphasized in the therapeutic areas in Figure 1 claim to have an average understanding of the MSL role of “good” or better. Oncology and metabolics/endocrine employees report the greatest understanding.
 - Based on the data reported in Figure 2, regulatory affairs has the lowest understanding of the MSL role.
 - The majority of the functional groups view educating healthcare professionals (HCPs) as the most important MSL role while sales representative training is their least valued responsibility.
 - In Figure 4, educating HCPs on the safe and appropriate use of products was reported as the most important MSL function among all therapeutic areas. Collecting competitive intelligence and speaker training are also considered of high importance to most of the therapeutic areas in the figure.
 - Those in regulatory affairs and marketing view MSL communication of field insights with headquarter based-employees as either good or fair, but not excellent (Figure 5).
 - Most therapeutic areas view MSL communications as “fair” to “good” (Figure 6).
- Limitations of this study include:**
- Vast majority of the respondents were from medical-based functional groups which may not be representative of all headquarters-based stakeholders.
 - The low response rate to the survey may have lead to results that are not projectable.
 - Many of the respondents work in multiple therapeutic areas which may result in duplicative responses as those responders could have been placed in multiple categories.
 - All observations presented in this poster are subjective.

CONCLUSIONS

- Respondents emphasized in the therapeutic areas in this analysis feel they have a strong understanding of an MSL’s activities.
- There seems to be an opportunity to improve regulatory affairs employees’ understanding of the MSL role.
- All headquarters-based stakeholders view educating HCPs on the safe and appropriate use of products as the most valuable MSL activity.
- Sales representative training is perceived to be the least valuable MSL activity.
- Although MSL communication back to headquarters is perceived as “good,” only a few survey respondents rank it as “excellent.” This indicates room for improvement.
- Further investigations objectively evaluating the understanding and value of various MSL responsibilities should be conducted.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad I, Todd O, et al. (2010, March). Measuring MSL Effectiveness: Perception vs. Reality. Poster session presented at the annual meeting of the Drug Information Association, Scottsdale, AZ.

DISCLOSURES & ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Authors of this presentation have the following to disclose concerning possible financial or personal relationships with commercial entities that may have a direct or indirect interest in the subject matter of this presentation:
- Jose Argueta, Anuj Patel, and Sheena Patel are paid employees of Rutgers University participating in post-doctoral fellowships within the RPIF program.
 - Evelyn Hermes-DeSantis has nothing to disclose
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