

# Assessing and Evaluating the Efficiency and Consistency of Medical Information Dissemination

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## Introduction

Due to the increasing progress of technological change, the process of obtaining information has evolved significantly. These advancements have altered the approaches to retrieval, accessibility, and distribution of medical information. The response methods to unsolicited requests has the capability to become even more efficient.

Within the pharmaceutical and biotech industry, the incorporation of technology into medical information practice varies. However, regardless of company or product, it is critical that best practices are followed to ensure prompt, appropriate, and consistent delivery of medical information.

## Objective

To assess the efficiency and consistency of response content between two different modes of dissemination and to evaluate the availability of brand product websites, after-hour and automated services.

## Methodology

### Design:

- Prospective analysis of response delivery and content from major industry-based medical information centers.

### Data Collection:

- Ten major industry-based medical information centers were contacted via two different methods: phone and postal mail.
- Company addresses and phone numbers of the medical information centers were found in 2005 PDR.
- Each company received two inquiries by both phone and postal mail:
  - In-label inquiry: indication
  - Off-label inquiry: use in pediatric population
- Inquiries were placed by practicing pharmacists.
- The time to receive the response was measured.
- The consistency of content between the dissemination methods (fax and postal mail) was compared by receipt of the letter, package insert, and clinical trial data reprints.
- The availability of additional resources such as websites, after-hour and automated services was also evaluated.

## Target Population

The following ten global pharmaceutical/biotech companies were included in the analysis:

- Abbott
- Amgen
- AstraZeneca
- Bristol-Myers Squibb
- Eli Lilly
- GlaxoSmithKline
- Novartis
- Ortho-Biotech
- sanofi aventis
- Pfizer

## Results – Efficiency and Consistency

Figure 1: Turn Around Time by Phone Request

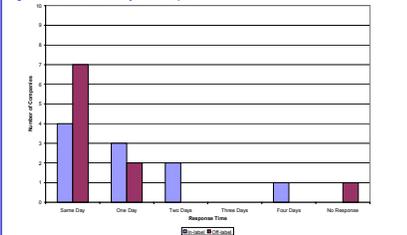


Figure 2: Turn Around Time by Mail Request

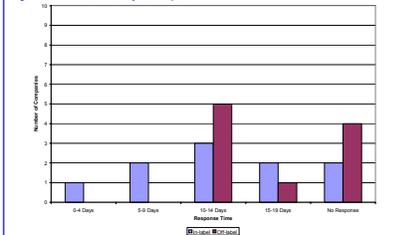


Figure 3: Response Content Consistency between Postal & Fax Delivery Mode: In-label

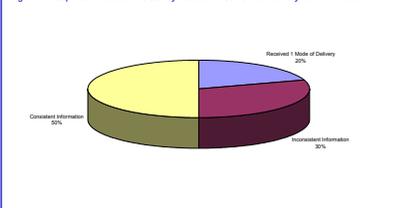


Figure 4: Response Content Consistency between Postal & Fax Delivery Mode: Off-label

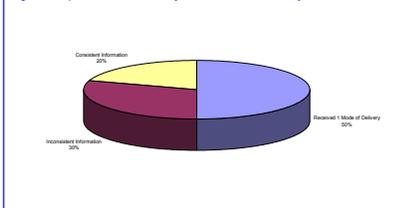
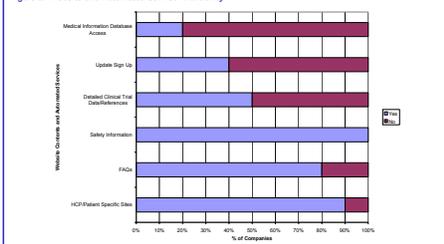


Figure 5: Website and Automated Service Availability



## Discussion

The majority of the companies had an effective response rate for both phone-fax and postal delivery to unsolicited requests. Of the forty unsolicited requests submitted via phone and postal mail, 33 responses were received. Response efficiency and consistency was affected by in-label versus off-label inquiries. Due to the lack of information available for the off-label inquiries, most companies responded over the phone within the same day stating "no data available." However, the postal response was not consistent; four of the ten companies did not respond at all to the off-label question via standard mail.

In addition to the assessment of efficiency and consistency, the study also evaluated the availability of brand product websites, after-hour and automated services.

- All ten companies had brand product websites.
- Nine of ten companies had after-hour services.
- The following automated services were available for the majority of the companies:
  - Detailed clinical trial data
  - Safety information
  - FAQs
  - Healthcare/Patient-Specific Sites
- Only two of ten companies had medical information database access specifically for healthcare professionals.

## Limitations

Limitations of this study included:

- The study consisted of only ten medical information centers within global pharmaceutical and biotech companies.
- Companies were located in different time zones which could have affected response time.
- Company mailing addresses and phone numbers from 2005 PDR may not have been recently updated.

## Conclusions

The results of the study demonstrated that medical information dissemination inquired by phone and delivered by fax is more efficient than the standard postal method for response inquiry and delivery. Brand product websites and automated services have also made medical information retrieval and distribution a tangible resource for both healthcare professionals and consumers. Thus, technological advancement has had a collective impact on availability and distribution of medical information.

This study may be used to further gauge the advancement of medical information dissemination for pharmaceutical and biotech companies and develop best practice standards.

## Disclosure

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