

## **The Changing Face of EMWA**

**Results from the questionnaires – Edinburgh, 1997 and Madrid, 1998**

**by Gerold Wilson and Barry Drees**

At the meeting in Edinburgh in 1997, the Executive Committee decided to revive the EMWA tradition of assessing our members' views using a questionnaire to help us make decisions about costs, future projects and, most importantly, which workshops to offer the next year. This worked quite well and so it was done the following year as well. Now that we finally have a second set of data points, we can get a rough idea of how stable the backgrounds and wishes of the membership really are. The questionnaire data also serve to give us a look at ourselves, i.e., what kinds of medical writers are we?

Unfortunately, although the response in 1997, while hardly overwhelming, was fairly reasonable (~50%), the response last year was very disappointing (30%) and thus it is very difficult to draw any conclusions (Tom Lang will never let Barry teach the statistics course if he sees us comparing these percentages). Still, assuming that these questionnaires are representative (which we have no way of knowing), one gets the general impression that things are in equilibrium, at least in terms of those members who attend the meetings and turn in the questionnaires.

An organization needs a good mix between old “regulars” and new members to stay healthy. There are some encouraging signs that we are a dynamic organization that's still growing. We had about the same number of new members at both meetings, although there was a slightly higher percentage of members attending their first meeting this year in Madrid. The fact that the average duration of membership of conference attendees increased by one year this year (if it means anything other than sampling bias) shows that members who attend conferences are likely to remain members. We're also very happy to report that the number of conference attendees who consider the EMWA costs (membership, conference and workshops) to be satisfactory went up in all three categories and was close to 80% or higher in 1998. Awareness of the website has apparently increased, but the number of members with no access to the internet remains stubbornly the same.

Finally, if you find this information interesting or would like to have your information added, please fill out the questionnaire accompanying this newsletter and return it to the editor (fax, post or e-mail) so that the EMWA leadership can stay informed about its membership and what they want.

**Summary of the responses for each year (where meaningful)**

Category	1997	1998
Response		
Total number	41	29
Rate (approx.)	50%	30%
Satisfied with EMWA costs (answered "just right" or "what a bargain")		
Membership	84%	93%
Conferences	57%	79%
Workshops	87%	93%
Prior background		
Research	50%	32%
Pharma. industry	28%	48%
University	13%	16%
Publishing	13%	3%
Biometrics	3%	0%
First heard of EMWA		
Colleagues	54%	63%
AMWA	17%	10%
Literature	10%	17%
Other	9%	3%

Category	1997	1998
Membership		
Duration	2.9 yr	3.8 yr
New member	29%	28%
EMWA provides (multiple answers possible, % of all responses)		
Education	26%	31%
Networking	26%	26%
Information	25%	25%
Social contacts	16%	15%
Freelance work	7%	1%
Other	0%	1%
Previous meeting attendance		
Average (no.)	2.2	2.3
First meeting	23%	33%
EMWA website		
Visited	61%	69%
No access	15%	17%
Unaware	22%	10%
Job status		
Industry	84%	73%
Freelance	16%	17%
Consulting	0	7%
Academic	0	3%

**Ten most desired workshops (in order of most popular)**

**1997**

Writing an Investigator's Brochure  
Advanced Tables and Graphs  
Regulatory Aspects of Drug Development  
Project Management  
Statistics  
Writing a Clinical Study Report  
Making Effective Presentations  
Data vs. Information: the CER  
Punctuation for Clarity and Style  
Freelance Career (Business Aspects)

**1998**

Writing an Investigator's Brochure  
Preparing a Dossier  
Regulatory Aspects of Drug Development  
Writing/Editing for Non-Native Speakers  
Improving Comprehension  
Advanced Tables and Graphs  
Writing a Clinical Study Report  
Introduction to Pharmacokinetics  
Ins-and-outs of ICH  
Organising the Biomedical Paper