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Australian Society of Orthodontists

Incorporated

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ASO Member Survey 2004

This ASO Member Survey was conducted to provide information to help shape the future direction of the ASO.

The statistician employed to oversee this survey considers the proportion of members who responded to be extremely high (58% of Full Members, 54% of all members) and an indication that ASO members are keen to express their views on the issues addressed in this survey.

Results and discussion

Demographics

The proportion of respondents who were male (89%) reflects the current gender ratio of ASO members.

The average age of respondents was 48 years.

Most respondents (87%) were Full Members of the ASO.

Most respondents were either in solo practice (49%) or group practice (39%) and most (86%) were self-employed.

Respondents had worked as orthodontists for an average period of 18 years.

About half of the respondents (52%) had a retirement plan; on average, respondents planned to semi-retire in 10 years and fully retire in 15 years.

These figures provide a useful benchmark for future manpower considerations.

ASO Membership and Finance

The vast majority of respondents (92%) felt that the ASO represents their interests, as ASO members, adequately or better.

A similar proportion of respondents (93%) felt that the ASO represents the interests of orthodontists in general adequately or better.

Most respondents (86%) were satisfied or very satisfied with information they receive about issues being dealt with by ASO Council.

Most respondents (79%) felt that the President's Message in the ASO Newsletter provides sufficient knowledge of the issues being dealt with by ASO Council and most of the remainder (12%) replied "Don't know". Only 9% of respondents disagreed with the proposition.

More than half of the respondents (53%) would like to see the minutes of ASO Annual General Meetings posted in a secure section of the ASO website. A further 29% of respondents were not concerned whether the minutes are posted or not.

The ASO Executive is heartened by the generally positive response to these questions and encourages members to voice any grievances through the appropriate channels.

When asked what fee Student Members of the ASO should pay to attend orthodontic courses and conferences run by the ASO, 42% of respondents felt that students should pay no fee and 50% felt that students should pay half fee.

In view of this response, and the fact that there is no subscription fee for ASO Student Membership, ASO Executive recommends that the existing Congress fee concession (half fee) be maintained.

ASO Newsletter

Most respondents (83%) were satisfied with the content of the ASO Newsletter.

The majority of respondents 70% would prefer to continue to receive the Newsletter in its existing printed format by post, on average, four times per year.

ASO Executive intends to publish the ASO Newsletter in its current format four times per year.

Australian Orthodontic Journal

Half of the respondents (50%) would like to maintain the existing balance of articles in the Australian Orthodontic Journal. Of the remainder, the vast majority (93%) would like to see more clinical articles.

Most respondents (85%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the content of the AOJ. Only 2% of respondents do not read the AOJ.

Most respondents either did not mind (19%) or were in favour of (58%) the ASO accepting non-dental advertisements in the AOJ to increase revenue.

A significant proportion of respondents (41%) were not in favour of changing the AOJ to electronic format. About one third of respondents (36%) were in favour of changing the AOJ to electronic format and the remainder did not mind. Many respondents would like to see the AOJ published in both forms.

These figures do not support changing the AOJ to electronic format at the present time. However, younger members were more inclined than older members to support a change to electronic format and it is anticipated that general support for a change will increase with time.

ASO Web Site

The vast majority of respondents (94%) have an email address. However, a high proportion (65%) reported visiting the ASO Web Site rarely or never.

Most respondents would like more information for ASO members (69%) and for the general public (78%) on the ASO Web Site.

Most respondents (67%) indicated that they would not use a Chat Room if one were to be set up for ASO members.

It is anticipated that, as more information is distributed in electronic format, the ASO Web Site will play an increasingly important role.

ASO Directory

A high proportion of respondents (78%) would prefer to receive the ASO Directory in its existing printed form.

ASO Council has decided to proceed with the publication of an updated ASO Directory which will be posted to ASO members later this year.

Australian Orthodontic Congress

On average, respondents felt that the Australian Orthodontic Congress should span four days.

The majority of respondents (68%) would prefer the Congress to incorporate a weekend and even more respondents (74%) would prefer a shorter (4 day) Congress with recreational activities before and/or after.

Overall, respondents rated the quality of overseas speakers at ASO Congresses and Foundation Meetings over the past 5 years as very good (35%), good (50%), satisfactory (13%) or poor (2%). No one rated overseas speakers as being very poor!

Most respondents (75%) preferred the existing balance of academic and clinical lectures and almost all of the remainder would prefer more clinical lectures.

About half of the respondents (46%) felt that the ASO should allow sponsored speakers, 19% felt that the ASO should not use sponsored speakers, and the remainder (35%) were not concerned. Several members commented that sponsored speakers should be required to declare their commercial interest.

Auxiliaries

The average number of orthodontists in respondents' practices was 2.

On average, each orthodontist employed 0.5 practice managers, 1.8 nurses, 1.0 receptionist, 0.9 hygienists, 0.9 administrators and 1.0 therapists.

This question attracted a significant proportion of inconsistent or incomplete answers and so these figures should be interpreted cautiously.

About one third of respondents (33%) usually bring staff to Australian Orthodontic Congresses. A significantly greater proportion of respondents (69%) would like to see more programmes for auxiliaries outside ASO Congresses (for example, at Clinical Days).

These results have been forwarded to ASO State Branch executives for consideration when planning future State Branch Meetings.

The numbers of respondents who indicated that they would encourage their staff to learn more about nominated topics are listed below. The topics are listed in order of popularity.

Topic	Responses
Telephone skills	201
Customer service	200
Sterilisation & infection control	191
Clinical photography	145
Products and equipment	139
Team building	138
Stock control	134
Marketing	128
Debt collection	99
Stress management	82
Digitising radiographs	77
Radiology	53
Insurance	31

Almost half of the respondents (42%) employed a hygienist. Responses to questions about what duties Dental Hygienists should be permitted by law to perform are summarised below:

Duty	Response		
	Yes	No	Not sure
Fix appliances to teeth	20%	73%	7%
Place arch wires	57%	39%	4%
Tie in arch wires	69%	29%	2%
Remove fixed appliances	75%	22%	3%
Remove adhesive from teeth	89%	9%	2%
Fit removable appliances	48%	50%	2%
Adjust removable appliances	12%	86%	2%

In hindsight, some of these duties were inadequately described in the questionnaire and/or open to interpretation. For example, some respondents commented that Dental Hygienists should be permitted to fit passive removable appliances but not permitted to fit active removable appliances.

Council is currently reviewing the ASO policy on Dental Auxiliaries. The general feeling of ASO members, as provided by these results, will provide valuable guidance.

Australian Orthodontic Board

Almost half of the respondents (45%) were involved in some stage of the AOB Certification process.

Almost half of the respondents (47%) who were not currently involved in the AOB, intend to become involved.

Public Relations

The current-affairs TV show 60 Minutes screened two segments on orthodontics in 2003.

Most respondents (73%) thought that these *60 Minutes* segments were harmful to the specialty of orthodontics. Fewer respondents (23%) thought that the segments were not harmful, and 4% did not know.

More than one quarter of respondents (28%) reported that their practices suffered as a result of these segments. Most respondents (57%) reported that their practices did not suffer and 15% did not know.

About one-third of respondents (34%) thought that the general public has a good understanding of orthodontics. Most respondents (59%) thought that the general public does not have a good understanding of orthodontics. The remainder (7%) did not know.

Fewer respondents (14%) thought that the general public has a good understanding of the distinction between general dentist and orthodontist when it comes to the delivery of orthodontic services. Most respondents (81%) thought that the general public does not have a good understanding of the distinction. The remainder (5%) did not know.

More than two-thirds of the respondents (71%) indicated that they would support an ASO Public Awareness and Education campaign aimed at:

1. Informing the public of the benefit of orthodontics.
2. Advising the public to choose an ASO orthodontist.

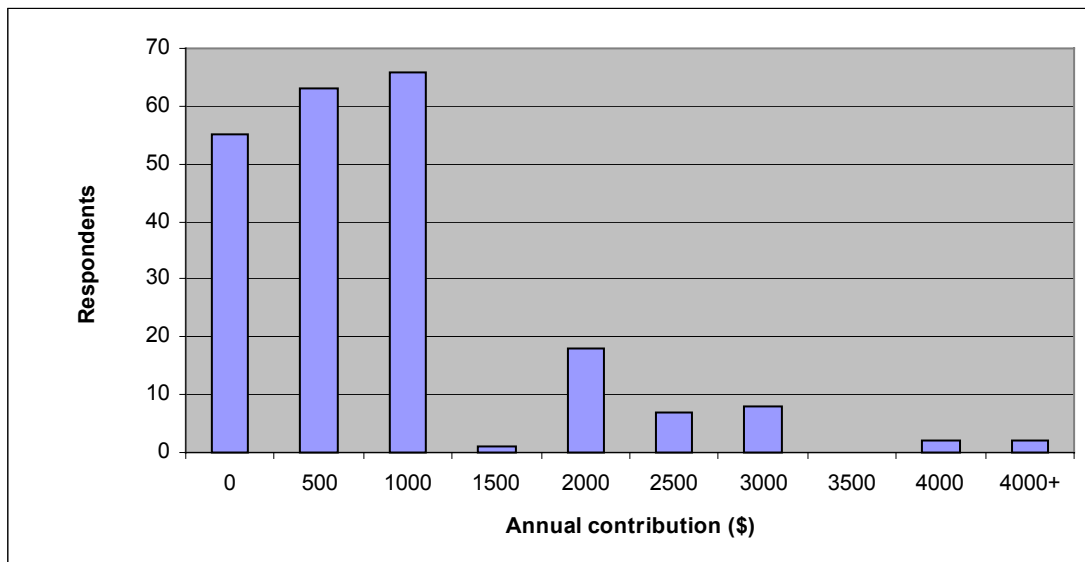
Only 14% of respondents indicated that they would not support such a campaign. The remainder (15%) were undecided.

The average amount that those respondents who answered this question (83%) would be prepared to contribute annually to such a campaign designed to run for 2-3 years

was \$867. The response \$4000+ was treated as \$4000 for the calculation of this average.

Of the Full Members who responded, 71% indicated that they would support a campaign and the average amount they would be prepared to contribute was \$891.

The numbers of respondents who would be prepared to contribute nominated annual amounts is shown in the following chart.



ASO Logo

Just over one third of the respondents (35%) preferred the existing logo. The same proportion (35%) preferred the proposed logo. However, a significant number of respondents (21%) did not like either logo. The remainder (9%) were undecided.

A common criticism of the new logo was that the by-line, *Creating Brighter Futures*, is inappropriate in that it is not sufficiently identifiable with orthodontics.

Considering the numerous comments received, and the fact that neither the existing logo nor the proposed logo attracted majority support, the ASO Executive intends to look at further logo alternatives.

The ASO thanks those members who participated in this survey which has provided valuable information to help shape the future direction of the ASO.