

Focus group results: Keep on doing what you're doing

Early in 2009 the *BCMJ* contracted Ipsos Reid to run focus groups to hear physician feedback about the value of the *Journal*. Four focus groups, with a total of 32 participants, were conducted in Vancouver (two sessions), Victoria, and Penticton. The locations were chosen randomly in a controlled double-blind fashion—either that or by whoever donated the most beer. Just for the record, that last statement is a lie, but alcohol might make focus groups more fun. Overall, the response was favorable. Participants said that they like and appreciate the *Journal* and there was no call to make any significant changes.

The participants appreciated the *BCMJ*'s informal, casual style and felt that local flavor is what makes it distinct. The areas that most portray local flavor are the letters, job listings, obituaries, local news, and the Work-SafeBC and ICBC sections. Participants liked that the *BCMJ* is written by and about doctors from their own medical communities. Surprisingly, little was said about the extremely high quality of the editorials. Perhaps so much positive feedback was received as to the editor's outstanding writing skills that there wasn't enough

room in the report to include it all. This is the only plausible explanation.

One area suggested for change is to promote our little-known web site (bcmj.org). Reactions to a short moderator-guided tour through the web site (bcmj.org) were very positive. On the web site the current issue can be viewed and archived articles can be found via an easy-to-use search feature. No log in is required. The web site (bcmj.org) can be accessed directly or through a link from the BCMA home page (bcma.org).

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Participants generally think of the *BCMJ* as a BCMA publication and were unaware of its arm's-length status. The *BCMJ* is free to publish without interference from the BCMA Board or Executive. However, this lack of interference didn't seem to be very important to the participants, as

they perceive the *Journal* to be apolitical and believe that this is a good thing. We suspect that if there were interference, members would notice, and it would be an issue.

The *BCMJ* will continue its endeavor to be a publication that the physicians of BC can be proud of. This is your *Journal* and your input is crucial. Please send in your thoughts, opinions, stories, studies, letters, musings, articles, manuscripts, poems, and anything else you might want to share. All of these will be considered for publication unless they are derogatory toward the editor. Oh, all right, even these will receive cursory consideration. Your submissions can be mailed (*BCMJ*, 115-1665 West Broadway, Vancouver, V6J 5A4) or e-mailed (journal@bcma.bc.ca). I might have forgotten to mention our web site (bcmj.org), which includes all the contact information guidelines for authors.

—DRR

*P.S. To the pathologist at the Vancouver focus group who had numerous scathing things to say about the *BCMJ*—not that you're likely to read this—but thank you for your input anyway.*

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