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7 Translational Education: Adapting to an Online Generation

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Background: Traditional vehicles for medical education manifest as physical textbooks, journal publications, and educational conferences. The average lag time for research evidence to reach clinical practice is 17 years.¹ Physical textbooks lag research by about 10 years and major educational conferences are usually held annually and by their nature do not result in rapid or wide information transfer.² It is now impossible for clinicians to keep up to date by reading pertinent journals as there are too many journals. Frequently, updated online textbooks such as eMedicine and UpToDate attempt to bridge that gap, but it is unclear how frequently Emergency Medicine physicians utilize these modalities.

Objective: This study seeks to determine the length of time since Emergency Medicine physicians have read an entire journal article, as well as determine their primary source for finding out new information.

Methods: A survey was administered in November 2013 during a large international educational conference (Essentials of Emergency Medicine) asking the following questions: “When is the last time you read an entire journal article?” and “What is your first source for finding out information regarding Emergency Medicine topics?”

Results: Of 368 responses, 36% read an entire journal article more than one year ago (Table 1). Of 170 responses, 66% utilize online textbooks such as eMedicine and UpToDate for their primary source for seeking new information (Table 2).

Conclusion: Of this surveyed group of Emergency Medicine physicians, over one-third have not read an entire journal article in over one year. Journals and literature databases appear to be rarely sought out for information, with a major shift in reliance on online textbooks and audio podcasts for clinical questions and new information. Educational techniques need to take this into consideration and adapt to a changing generation of adult learners.

Figure 1. When is the last time you read an entire journal article?

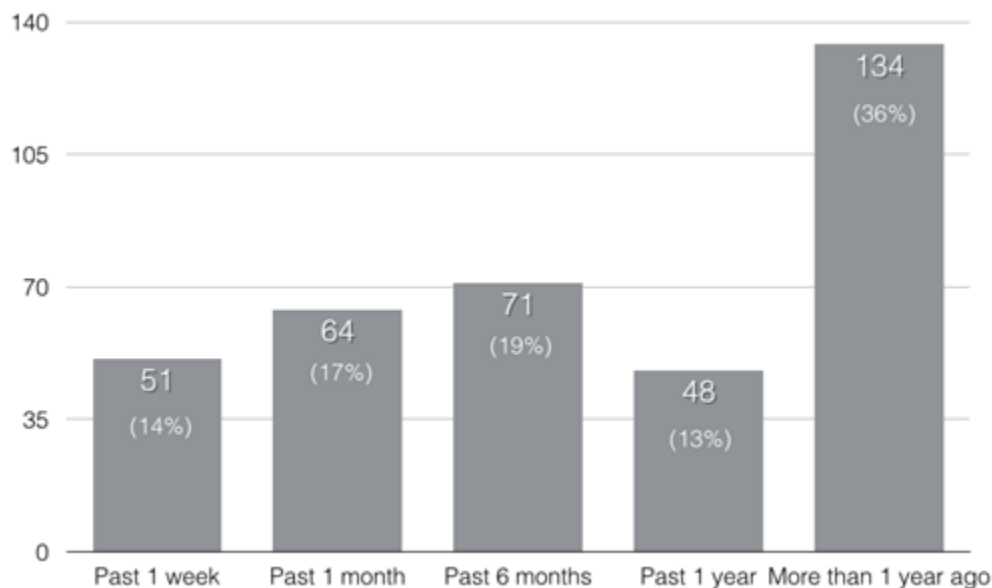


Figure 2. What is your first source for finding out information regarding emergency medicine topics?

