***CORR* Insights®: Factors Associated With Survey Response in Hand Surgery Research**

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Received: 21 June 2013 / Accepted: 1 July 2013 / Published online: 13 July 2013
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Where Are We Now?

Bot et al. provided a clear and succinct introduction to the survey nonresponse problem. Health surveys, especially those using validated outcome instruments, are a primary means for tracking and assessing the results of clinical interventions over time. Completing surveys at a distance (by mail or email) provides significant logistical advantages. However, response rates from these surveys are often low, and this affects the validity of the research.

Where Do We Need to Go?

This prospective study, to my knowledge, is a first-of-its-kind in orthopaedics. The results of this study showed that patients with greater pain, especially those who are more concerned about their pain, along with younger, male patients are least likely to respond to mailed surveys. The current study generated an overall response rate of 34%, which the authors report is consistent with prior retrospective studies, but well below the response rates reported in many other studies. This may be the result of a regional variation in responsiveness, which would be a cofactor not discerned in a single-center study. Additionally, this study evaluated the responsiveness of hand surgery patients. Similar work should be performed in other orthopaedic specialties, and in multicenter settings.

This CORR Insights® is a commentary on the article “Factors Associated With Survey Response in Hand Surgery Research” by Bot and colleagues available at: DOI: [10.1007/s11999-013-3126-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11999-013-3126-0). The author certifies that he, or a member of his immediate family, has no funding or commercial associations (eg, consultancies, stock ownership, equity interest, patent/licensing arrangements, etc.) that might pose a conflict of interest in connection with the submitted article.

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*This *CORR* Insights® comment refers to the article available at DOI: [10.1007/s11999-013-3126-0](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11999-013-3126-0).*

How Do We Get There?

A weakness of this study was that it failed to attempt to contact nonresponders to assess their reasons for not participating in the survey. Greater insight into this issue could help us understand the rationale and motives that drive patients to participate in survey studies, as well as the reasons that keep patients from taking part in them. Lastly, we need to propose and test methods that accommodate for these factors and improve the response rate to surveys. If/as we move to an outcomes-based reimbursement healthcare system, it will become more important to effectively solicit and obtain the feedback of our patients.

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