

OREGON CHIROPRACTOR WEB SURVEY
FEBRUARY 2005 – MARCH 2005

SURVEY METHODOLOGY
SURVEY INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT
DATA COLLECTION



OREGON SURVEY RESEARCH LABORATORY
5245 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON
EUGENE, OR 97403-5245
TELEPHONE: 541-346-0824
FACSIMILE: 541-346-0388
EMAIL: OSRL@UOREGON.EDU
WWW: HTTP:// OSRL.UOREGON.EDU/

JUYEON SON, PROJECT DIRECTOR
SAM PORTER, PROJECT ASSISTANT

INTRODUCTION

The Oregon Board of Chiropractic Examiners (OBCE) contracted with the University of Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL) to conduct a web based survey of Oregon chiropractors. The study's goal is to gather feedback from chiropractors on OBCE's missions and goals, and other key issues facing Oregon chiropractors. Working closely with OBCE Executive Director Dave McTeague, OSRL planned and implemented a web survey. To inform chiropractors about the survey and to encourage participation, OSRL first mailed pre-contact letters to 1,180 Oregon chiropractors, followed ten days later by a "nudge" call to those who had not yet participated.

This report summarizes the survey methodology, survey instrument development, and data collection.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

SURVEY INSTRUMENT DEVELOPMENT

Survey questions were developed in close consultation with OBCE, with special care exercised to ensure that the questions address issues that are of importance to OBCE. OBCE provided the original draft of the survey and OSRL staff worked on a number of revisions of the instrument making sure that the final survey instrument has proper skip logic, non-biased question wording, and flow.

The survey instrument comprised the following specific subject areas:

1. **Demographic Information Related to Career:** years in practice; philosophy; professional affiliations; and current practice setting.
2. **Issues Facing the Profession in Oregon.**
3. **Issues Facing OBCE as a Regulatory Agency.**

4. **OBCE Job Performance:** mission statement; strategic plan goals; public protection; professional competency; professional standards and recommendations; liaison/communication goal; and overall performance.
5. **OBCE Communication:** staff responsiveness; pending transition to birth month relicensing in June 2005; areas where members want more information from OBCE; quality of OBCE performance in keeping members informed about changes in licensure rules and laws; and OBCE web page.
6. **Key Professional Issues:** excessive fees; alleged excessive treatment of patients; importance of and resources for staying current with chiropractic health care science and research; Educational Manual for Evidence Based-Chiropractic; and Oregon Chiropractic & Utilization Guidelines.
7. **Proposed Legislation Regarding Regulation of Chiropractic Health Care.**
8. **Member Participation in OBCE.**
9. **General Demographic Information:** sex, race, chiropractic college attended; malpractice insurance, etc.

All surveys were completely confidential. Human subject's approval was obtained from the University of Oregon's Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects.

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Working with OBCE, OSRL developed a survey methodology to conduct this web survey. Due to the difficulties in reaching and getting responses from chiropractors who usually have busy schedules to participate in a survey, OSRL and OBCE agreed that a web survey would be the most appropriate means to conduct this survey. Web survey has certain advantages over other modes of survey because of its flexibility of time, space, and pace. In addition, a web survey generally costs less than mail or telephone interview surveys.

This study involved: 1) mailing out pre-contact letters; 2) web survey; and 3) a "nudge" call for those who did not complete the survey one week after the pre-contact letters were mailed to them. Although mailing out paper copies of the survey was not offered, OSRL sent 9 copies of the paper version survey upon requests by chiropractors.

OSRL first sent pre-contact letters to 1,180 chiropractors in the OBCE list (including 3 international) on February 7th, 2005 (see Figure 1). In order to ensure confidentiality, OSRL generated random numbers to be used as PINs to gain online access to the survey instrument. In the letter, the respondents were informed of the purpose and significance of the survey, and asked to participate in the survey by logging on to the survey website and type in the five-digit PIN provided in the letter. This information was also provided when conducting the nudge call.

Figure 1.
Pre-Contact Letter

February 7, 2005

<Name of Chiropractor > DC
<Address>
<City>, <State> <Zip>

Oregon Chiropractic Physicians' Online Survey
Your Response Requested

Dear Dr. <Name of Chiropractor>,

Your experiences and opinions are important! The Oregon Board of Chiropractic Examiners (OBCE) needs to better understand how you as a professional think about the OBCE's mission and goals, overall performance, communication, as well as your thoughts about several key chiropractic policy issues. To better serve its stakeholders, the OBCE needs your feedback.

The OBCE has contracted with Oregon Survey Research Laboratory (OSRL), located at the University of Oregon, to conduct this important survey. All actively licensed chiropractic physicians are asked to participate. OSRL identified you from a list provided by the OBCE.

Completing the survey is easy. From your computer, go to <http://osrl.uoregon.edu/obce/> and use the following unique login code to gain access: 1111

It is completely voluntary, and all surveys will be treated confidentially. No one will ever be able to connect your name with your answers. The survey results will be presented only in averages and percentages, so that no individual responses can be identified. Also, the results will be available for review on our web page and a summary will be presented in the next issue of the OBCE's BackTalk newsletter.

Please complete the questionnaire by February 15th. If you haven't completed the survey by that date, we will call you to remind you.

If you have any questions about the survey or this research project, feel free to contact me by telephone at 541-346-0822 or by email at choquett@uoregon.edu.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Only with the generous help of people like you can this research be successful.

Sincerely,

Robert Choquette
Acting Director

SAMPLE AND DATA COLLECTION

OBCE provided OSRL with a list of its active members. OSRL mailed a pre-contact letter to every person in the list including three international addresses.

Ten days after the letters were mailed, OSRL conducted a reminder calling (nudge call) to those who have not logged on to the web site. As of Feb 15th, 990 members had not attempted to log on to the survey web site. Of those 990 people, 954 people in the United States had listed phone numbers. The nudge calls were made between Feb 16th and 18th, from 9:00am till 5:00pm. Every number was called and OSRL either talked with the chiropractors, or left a message regarding the survey with the receptionist or on an answering machine for 829 contacts. Seven percent (65 numbers) of the total numbers attempted were ineligible, i.e., disconnected, non-working, fax/modems, or other types of telephone lines unsuitable for completing a survey. Completed calls comprised 93.3% (829 numbers) of all eligible numbers¹. For 3.2% (31 numbers), the telephone was consistently busy or never answered, and thus their suitability for interviewing could not be ascertained. Just 0.5% (5 numbers) resulted in refusals. For another 0.4% (4 numbers) of telephone numbers, OSRL interviewers could not reach the respondents because they were unable to interview ever or gone during the days calls were made.

As for the web survey, 486 chiropractors have attempted to participate and 384 have completed the survey. Of those 1,180 pre-contact letters sent, 19 were returned to OSRL because they were undeliverable as addressed. Not counting the 19 cases, the overall response rate was 33%. In the final products, partially completed surveys are not included, except in the narrative responses to open-ended questions, in order to ensure its statistical validity and reliability.

In terms of the length, the survey participants took as long as five hours 43 minutes and as little as 10 minutes to complete the survey². It is possible that some participants could have started the survey, walk away from their computers and come back to finish it later. Taking that into account, OSRL data base indicated the average time it took for people to complete the survey was 2 hours and 25 minutes. Given that the average response rate for web survey usually range between 20-30% at most, that the survey web site was available for only three weeks, and that it took an average of more than two hours to complete, it is striking to see 33% response rate of a survey of this kind.

DATA REDUCTION

Upon the completion of the data collection, OSRL conducted a comprehensive recoding and data reduction of the survey responses. All questions that involved “select all that apply” or ranking were recoded into dummy variables. This resulted in 187 variables in the final data set.

OSRL provides OBCE with four kinds of survey products: Toplines (frequencies of the answers with embedded questions), narrative responses to open-ended questions, cross tabulation tables, and this methodology report.

¹ The percentage of the completed calls of all the numbers except those that were ineligible.

² This only includes surveys completed in one day.

Toplines lists frequencies of the answers as well as the percentages. When applicable, OSRL presents valid percents as well as general percents in the topline. Valid percent is calculated by taking the number of completed surveys divided by the number of valid answers on a particular question. Missing answers are excluded in the valid percent. Valid percent is useful because it reveals the actual proportion of the answer out of all responses. For example, in a survey of 10 people, two answered “yes”, three said “no” and the other five did not answer to a question. The general percent of those who said yes would be 30% in this example, and the valid percent would be 60%.