

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE SENT TOGETHER WITH THE “ANNUAL MALTA CONGENITAL ANOMALIES REPORT 2000” OF THE MALTA CONGENITAL ANOMALIES REGISTRY.

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Introduction

The Malta Congenital Anomalies Registry has issued regular reports since it started functioning within the Department of Health Information in 1997. All these reports are available on the Registry's webpage (<http://www.health.gov.mt/ministry/dhi/mcar.htm>).

In 1997, the Registry started by publishing regular short six monthly reports which could be widely circulated to all medical practitioners and publishing a comprehensive, more detailed 5 year report – however due to publishing and postage costs a comprehensive report this size could only have a very limited distribution.

In 2001, after some discussion within the Department of Health Information, it was decided to create an annual report instead of the previous six-monthly reports. The annual report would be more detailed than the six-monthly ones however less comprehensive than the 5 yearly report. In this format the report could be widely circulated to all medical practitioners and interested individuals / organisations.

It was decided to send a short questionnaire with this report to have feedback from and get the opinions of the targeted audience. The aim being to improve the quality of the report by including items the targeted audience expected to read, while giving less prominence to topics of little interest to the readers.

Method

The questionnaire sent with the annual report was designed to be brief and easy to complete, however it allowed ample space for free text and comments. For practical reasons it was self addressed and designed to fit within an A4 size document that could be folded, stapled and mailed with ease. A copy to the questionnaire is seen in Annex 1.

The questionnaire consisted of straight forward questions with yes/no answers and only two graded response questions. Space was given for free text and comments. The questionnaire was designed in a way that it could be used in the same format with future reports as an evaluation tool.

Results

A total of 1000 reports and questionnaires were sent to all registered medical practitioners, interested individuals and organisations. A total of 81 responses were received, this gave an approximate 8% response rate. All responses were entered on an excel spreadsheet.

From the respondents, 79 (96%) replied that they thought data regarding congenital anomalies should be collected, 2 respondents did not complete this field and no-one stated that this data should not be collected. 30 (37%) of respondents said that they had ever used this data/information. 69 (84%) stated that they wished to continue receiving this report, several of those stating they would not like to continue receiving the report said so because they could download it from the website.

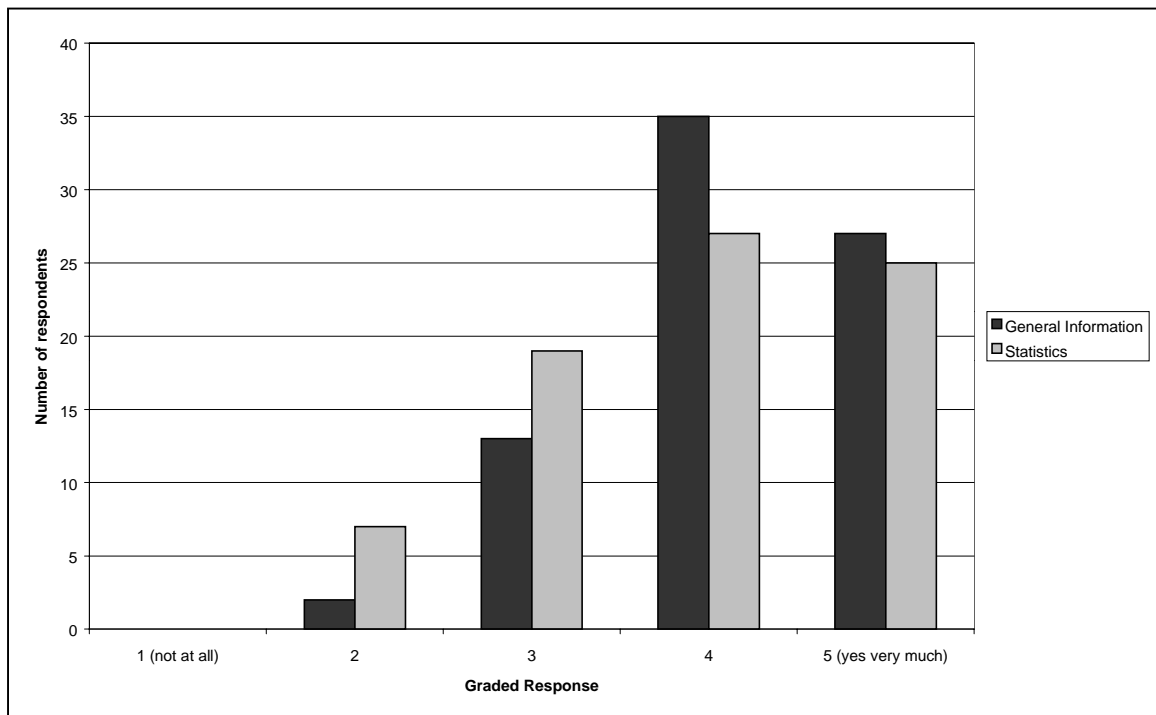
Regarding report content, 9 (11%) stated that the report was too detailed, while 7 (9%) considered that the report lacked relevant details.

The two 1 to 5 graded response answer questions aimed at investigating whether the audience was more interested in the statistics per se or whether they preferred reading the section with general information. In this particular report the section with general information discussed prenatal diagnosis with ultrasound and gave particular reference to the results of prenatal ultrasonography in Malta as regards diagnosis of congenital anomalies. The results of these questions are shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Table 1: Interest in General Information Section vs. Statistics Section

Graded Response	Interest in			
	General Information Section		Statistics Section	
	Respondents	%	Respondents	%
1 (No, not at all)	0	0	0	0
2	2	2.5	7	8.6
3	13	16.0	19	23.5
4	35	43.2	27	33.3
5 (Yes, very much)	27	33.3	25	30.9
Unanswered	4	5.0	3	3.7
Total	81	100.0	81	100.0

Figure 1: Interest in General Information Section vs. Statistics Section



It is evident that more of the respondents were interested in the general information section rather than the purely statistical section. Highlighting the importance of including such sections in reports circulated to this audience.

Regarding the format of the report 22 (27%) stated that the format could be changed to include other data / information. The great majority of comments were to include sections describing time trends of occurrence of congenital anomalies and comparisons of prevalence with other countries.

Of the 81 respondents, 33 (40%) were aware that these reports are available on the Department's website.

Conclusions

The overall response rate for this questionnaire was low (only 8%), however certain patterns in response were seen and conclusions can be drawn. From the responses it is evident that data collection regarding congenital anomalies is considered important, however few had actually used this data or knew about its availability on the internet. This implies that efforts to create more awareness of this registry and the information available needs to be undertaken.

Most respondents expressed the wish to continue receiving the report in spite of its being available on the web. It appears that the electronic format still has not replaced the value of and need for hard copies.

Respondents showed a greater interest in the General Information Section when compared with the interest in the Statistical Section. This confirms that the time and effort put into creating a "General information Section" is well spent even though the Department of Health Information is responsible mainly for issuing statistics.

Many respondents expressed a wish to see time trends and comparison of local rates with those quoted abroad. Having seen the interest in such analysis it is aimed that future reports will include a short section regarding this information for a selection of the more major anomalies.

ANNEX I – Questionnaire sent with annual report

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Questionnaire regarding your views on the Malta Congenital Anomalies Register Report

(mark as appropriate)

Do you think that data regarding congenital anomalies should be collected? Yes μ No μ

Have you ever made use of this data / information? Yes μ No μ

Do you wish to continue receiving this report? Yes μ No μ

Do you find the report as - too detailed? Yes μ No μ
- lacks relevant details? Yes μ No μ

Does the section with general information interest you?
← ↑ → ↓ °
No, not at all Yes, very much

Does the section with statistics interest you?
← ↑ → ↓ °
No, not at all Yes, very much

Do you think the format of the report should change or include other data / information? Yes μ No μ

Please Specify: _____

Are you aware that these reports are available on the Department's website? Yes θ No θ

Other Comments: _____

Name and Address (optional):

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION !

Results of this questionnaire will be made available on our website – <http://www.health.gov.mt/ministry/dhi/mcar.htm>