

Smooth Sailing With the Reading of Medical Publications

Print Measurement Bureau

By Steve Ferley, President, PMB

Two questions often asked in pharmaceutical marketing circles are: "How does the readership of medical publications fluctuate throughout the year?" and, to put it more basically: "Will my ad be in front of the same number of eyeballs in the summer months as in the rest of the year?"

The Print Measurement Bureau (PMB) now has information which goes a long way to answering these questions. PMB's Medical Media Study provides data on the readership of medical publications to pharmaceutical companies, advertising agencies, and publishers. The data are collected from questionnaires mailed to a scientifically selected sample of physicians and specialists. Because the mailings are done throughout the entire year, PMB now has input on the important subject of the seasonality of readership.

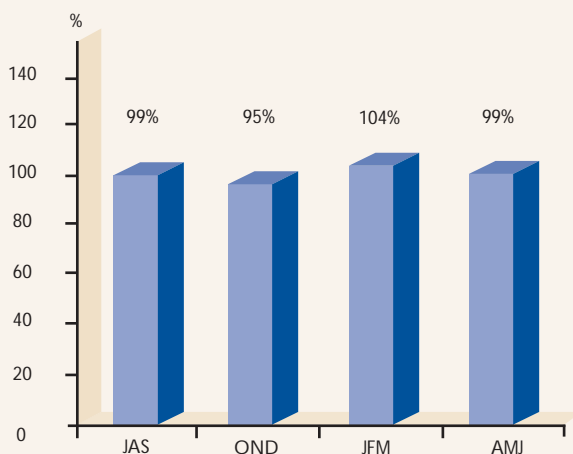
The Medical Media Study measures as many as 39 titles. Figure 1 shows that, on average, across all the publications, readership was virtually identical in each of the four quarters of the year. In practical terms, this

means that if a pharmaceutical advertiser is using a number of different publications in a campaign, there will be a relatively equal number of exposures over the course of the year. Interestingly, if the quarter-by-quarter analysis is done slightly differently—with one of the quarters being June/July/August—the seasonality aspect does not change. Publication readership is still constant in that three-month period, with the index being 98% of the annual average.

The figures provide telling evidence to disprove an often-stated view that print advertising for pharmaceutical products should be reduced in the summer months because readership may be lower at that time of year.

For more information on the readership surveys, please contact the PMB at (416) 961-3205. [CPM](#)

Figure 1. Fluctuation in average readership by season (relative to 12 month average).



How to read the chart:

100% represents the average total readership across all the medical publications measured and reported in the PMB Medical Media Study (MMS 2003). In both the July/August/September and April/May/June quarters, the readership of all measured publications was 99% of the average for the year.



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