

What Do You Think about the Journal of Korean Neurosurgical Society? : Survey of Korean Neurosurgical Society Members

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The editorial department of Journal of Korean Neurosurgical Society (JKNS) polled more than 1,210 members of the Korean Neurosurgical Society (KNS) to evaluate the present status of JKNS from a viewpoint of readers or authors. The survey form includes questions about the impressions and opinions of JKNS regarding to its contents, style, and service. The responses were collected by means of e-mail and a total of 107 replies could be gathered during 2 months. Analysis of the responses revealed that majority of members of the KNS recognized the efforts to improve the quality of JKNS during recent years. However, there was also apprehensions and discontent about the quality of articles and review process in some KNS members.

KEY WORDS : Journal of Korean Neurosurgical Society · Korean Neurosurgical Society members · Survey.

Introduction

It has been 34 years since the first issue of Journal of Korean Neurosurgical Society (JKNS) was published in October, 1972⁴. Along with the development of Korean Neurosurgical Society (KNS), the JKNS has undergone many changes in its compilation and style. During the past several years, the editorial department of JKNS has struggled to carry out a radical renovation in appearance and contents¹. All manuscripts submitted to JKNS are required to be written in English since January, 2005³. The cover design is changed every issues using pictures from the papers or other meaningful artworks². New sections such as 'Letters to the Editor', 'Commentary' and 'Inside Story' including an interview of a person and news in culture were newly established to get near to the readers more easily². Now the JKNS can be looked up through KoreaMed since 2002 and the texts of the papers are offered in the journal homepage (<http://jkns.or.kr>) which was opened in 2000². Besides, the JKNS was selected as a candidate journal for registration in the evaluation of Korea Research Foundation at the year of 2003¹. For all these efforts, there have been no chances

to contact directly with the members of the KNS, who are the essential readers and authors of the JKNS, about their opinions of those changes of the JKNS. The editorial department of JKNS polled the members of the KNS to evaluate the present status of JKNS from a viewpoint of users.

Materials and Methods

During the two months of period (from June 26, 2006 to August 26, 2006), members of the KNS were asked to answer the survey form composed of eleven multiple-choice questionnaires and one open question. There are a total of 1981 members and about 400 associate or special members are registered in the KNS currently. The survey form was delivered to 1210 members by e-mail and posted at the bulletin board of web site of the KNS so that members who could not make direct connections by e-mail can join in. The questionnaires were in Korean and their English version is summarized in Table 1. The respondents were asked to transmit their answers by means of e-mail. The collected responses were analyzed with regard to the frequency of chosen answers according to

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Table 1. Questionnaires included in the survey form (translated from Korean)

Questions	Response
Basic information :	
Membership class	<input type="checkbox"/> member <input type="checkbox"/> associate member <input type="checkbox"/> special member <input type="checkbox"/> non-member
Practice condition	<input type="checkbox"/> faculty in training hospital <input type="checkbox"/> pay doctor <input type="checkbox"/> private practice <input type="checkbox"/> others
Age	<input type="checkbox"/> 20~29 <input type="checkbox"/> 30~39 <input type="checkbox"/> 40~49 <input type="checkbox"/> 50~59 <input type="checkbox"/> 60 and more
Q1. How earnestly do you read JKNS every month?	<input type="checkbox"/> most articles carefully <input type="checkbox"/> interesting articles only <input type="checkbox"/> only titles and abstracts <input type="checkbox"/> only annex <input type="checkbox"/> nothing
Q2. What do you think of publishing articles in English?	<input type="checkbox"/> desirable thing <input type="checkbox"/> good but not now, later will be better <input type="checkbox"/> unfavorable thing even afterwards <input type="checkbox"/> should be left to authors choice <input type="checkbox"/> no idea
Q3. Do you have experience as an author of JKNS?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no
Q3.1 Have you satisfied with review process?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no (please describe the reason)
Q3.2 Do you wish to submit your manuscript to JKNS in the future?	<input type="checkbox"/> yes <input type="checkbox"/> no (please describe the reason)
Q4. What is your impression about cover design of JKNS?	<input type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input type="checkbox"/> inappropriate <input type="checkbox"/> no idea
Q5. What do you think of quality of articles published in JKNS?	<input type="checkbox"/> high quality <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input type="checkbox"/> low quality <input type="checkbox"/> no idea
Q6. What do you think of commentaries about articles?	<input type="checkbox"/> instructive <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input type="checkbox"/> useless <input type="checkbox"/> no idea
Q7. What do you think of letters to the editor section?	<input type="checkbox"/> instructive <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input type="checkbox"/> useless <input type="checkbox"/> no idea
Q8. What do you think of inside story section?	<input type="checkbox"/> interesting <input type="checkbox"/> fair <input type="checkbox"/> useless <input type="checkbox"/> no idea
Q9. How often do you visit JKNS homepage?	<input type="checkbox"/> frequently <input type="checkbox"/> occasionally <input type="checkbox"/> rarely <input type="checkbox"/> no idea
Q10. What do you think of web-based service of JKNS?	<input type="checkbox"/> excellent <input type="checkbox"/> needs minor improvement <input type="checkbox"/> needs major improvement <input type="checkbox"/> no idea
Q11. In general, what is your opinion about current status of JKNS?	<input type="checkbox"/> nothing to desire <input type="checkbox"/> needs minor improvement under current formality <input type="checkbox"/> needs radical reform <input type="checkbox"/> no idea
Q12. Please state your wishes for JKNS freely.	

the individual questions. The margin of sampling error was calculated using the following formula; (sampling error) = (confidence level) × (standard deviation of variable in population)/(sample size)^{1/2}.

Results

A total of 107 persons were responded to the survey whose responses were all completely appropriate for analysis. For results based on this sample, one can say with 95% confidence that the margin of sampling error is ± 9.5 percentage points. The majority of respondents were members of the KNS (n=105, 98%), while only 2 associate members (2%) responded to the survey. Faculty members of training hospital held the largest group of respondents (n=82, 77%), followed by pay doctors (n=15, 14%), others (n=8, 7%) and private practice neurosurgeons (n=2, 2%). Age of respondents were relatively evenly distributed that 2 persons were in their 20s (2%), 39 in 30s (36%), 40 in 40s (37%), 23 in 50s (21%), and 3 persons were in their age over 60 (3%).

The degree of interest to the JKNS

We could infer the member's degree of interest to the JKNS from the answer for the question 1. What is encouraging result was that 80% (n=86) of sample population gave an affirmative answers that they read most articles or at least interesting articles

carefully in every issue of JKNS (Fig. 1). There was no remarkable difference about the reader's interest among age groups or working conditions (Table 2).

As an author

The question 2 and 3 are asking about the satisfactions as an author of JKNS. Concerning the regulations of only accepting English manuscripts, 67% (n=72) of sample population completely agreed with the current policy, while 24% (n=25) still prefers author's free choice of language or using Korean (Fig. 2). The rest 9% (n=10) had affirmative ideas about English manuscript but they thought it was premature to carry out

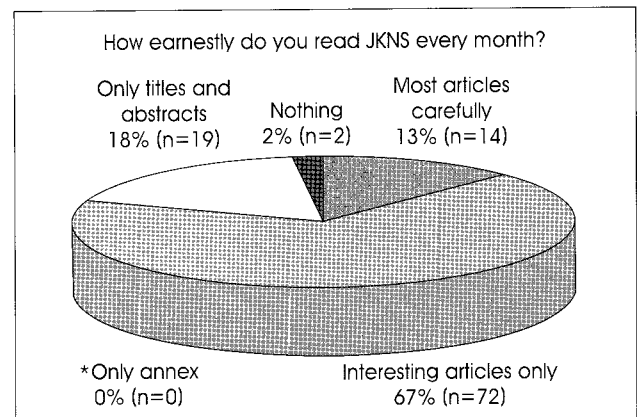


Fig. 1. Response to the question "How earnestly do you read JKNS every month?"

Table 2. Distribution of reader's interests among age groups or working conditions analyzed using a result of responses to the question "How earnestly do you read JKNS every month?"

	Most articles carefully	Interesting articles only	Only titles and abstracts	Only annex	Nothing	N
Age groups						
20~29		100%				2
30~39	18%	64%	15%		3%	39
40~49	10%	68%	22%			40
50~59	9%	70%	17%		4%	23
60 or more	33%	67%				3
Working conditions						
faculty	16%	66%	18%			82
pay doctor	7%	66%	20%		7%	15
private practice		50%	50%			2
others		88%			12%	8

the plan. Most of the respondents (n=103, 96%) had the experience of submission of manuscript to JKNS. Among them, 73% (n=75) were mentioned that the review process of JKNS was satisfactory while other 27% (n=28) expressed discontent. Quality of review and the speed of the process were the major

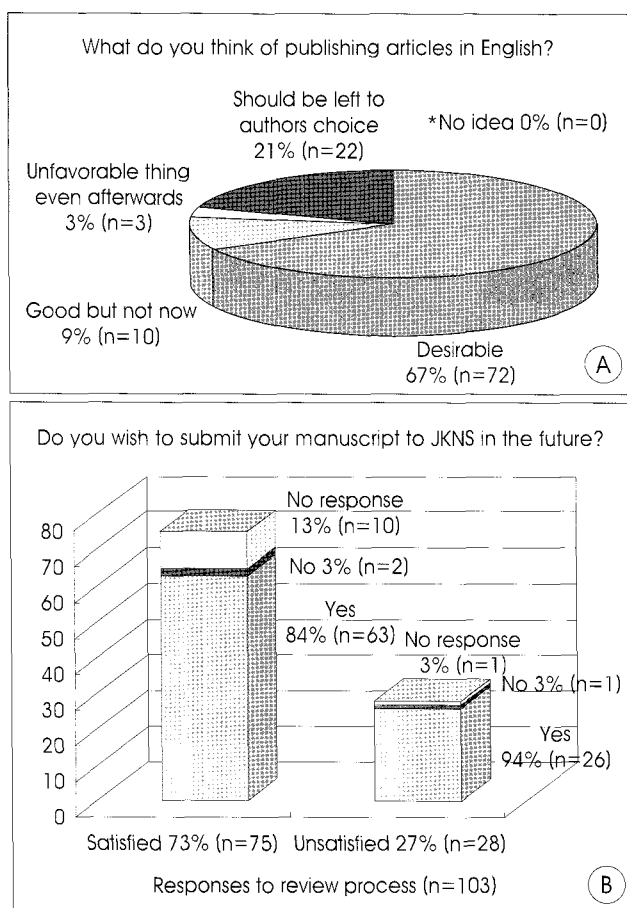


Fig. 2. Result of questions related to the standpoint of an author. (A) Response to the question "What do you think of publishing articles in English?". (B) Comparison of response to the question "Do you wish to submit your manuscript to JKNS in the future?" between two groups classified by satisfaction with the review process.

reason of dissatisfaction. On asking the intention to submit manuscript to the JKNS in the future, 84% (n=90) responded to have a favor, while only 6% (n=6) answered that they had no plan and other 10% (n=10) did not responded. Interestingly, 93% (n=26) of those who were not satisfied with review process (n=28) had the plan to submit the manuscript again to JKNS, while 84% (n=63) of satisfied group (n=75) expressed the same intention (Fig. 2).

As a reader

Appraisal of contents of JKNS from a standpoint of a reader could be evaluated by the answers of question 4, 5, 6, 7, and 8. The results are shown in Figure 3. Although majority of the responses were favorable on the whole, the quality of article didn't rate so high that only 16% of sample population said "excellent". Other sections were positively supported by readers that at least half of the population was fully satisfied with the contents. Cover design won the most favorable impression by the readers that only 5% were unsatisfied or indifferent.

About web service

The question 9 and 10 are asking about the interests and satisfactions about web-based service of JKNS. Among the sample populations, 21% were frequent visitors and 62% were occasional visitors to JKNS homepage (Fig. 4). And 16% answered that they visit JKNS homepage rarely. However, not a few members felt inconvenience about web-based service.

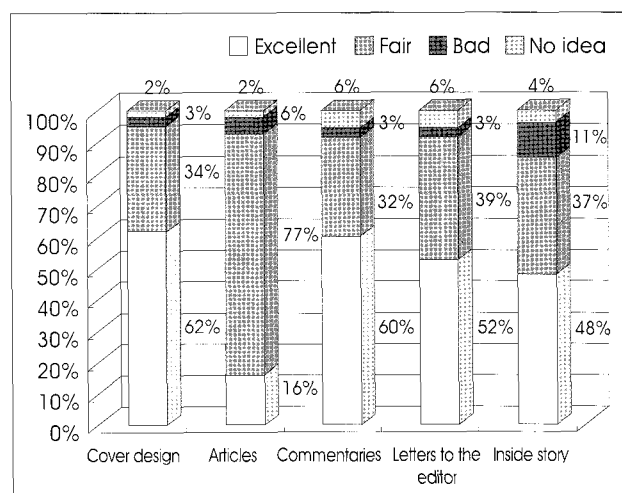


Fig. 3. Result of questions related to the standpoint of a reader. Opinions about quality or necessities of cover design, articles, commentaries, letters to the editor, and inside story.

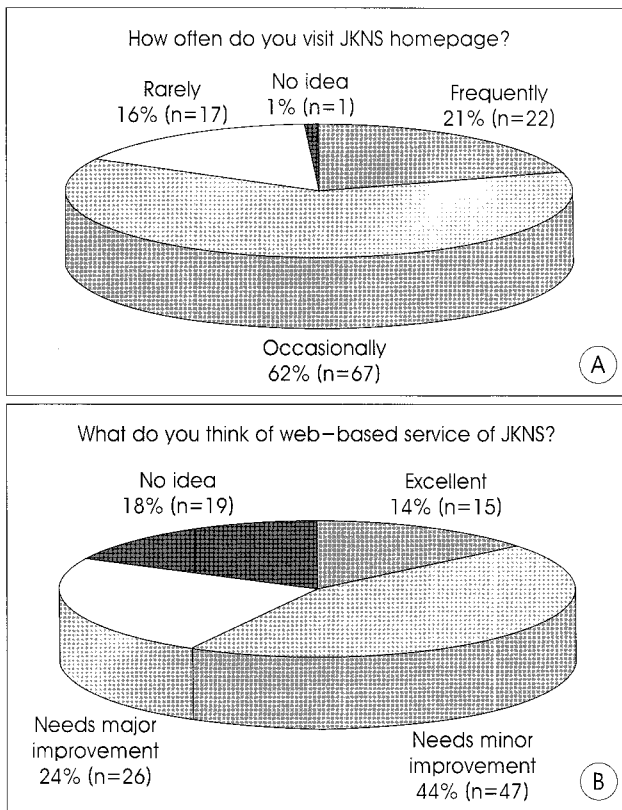


Fig. 4. Result of questions related to the web-based service of JKNS. (A) Response to the question "How often do you visit JKNS homepage?". (B) Response to the question "What do you think of web-based service of JKNS?".

Approximately 44% of respondents replied that minor improvement is needed and 24% required major improvement for web-based service. Only 14% were fully satisfied with the service.

General critique

Every respondent was asked for offering general critique about JKNS in question 11. In general, 26% were replied that there was nothing to desire with the present state and 63% conceived the JKNS to be needed just minor improvement under current formality. However, 11% were unsatisfied with the present state that they felt necessity of radical reform. The last question was opened for free description about the idea of JKNS. Many beneficial and scathing opinions were suggested. Among the several common opinions, the most problematic topic was the quality of published articles and their clumsiness in English writings. Those were proposed to be the major fundamental obstacles to go for the future registration of JKNS in Science Citation Index which matter is ardent hope mentioned by many members. Another criticism was the low quality and inconsistency of reviewers and the time-consuming review process. Several members complained of the ineffectiveness of the searching engine installed in JKNS web-site. Additionally, the

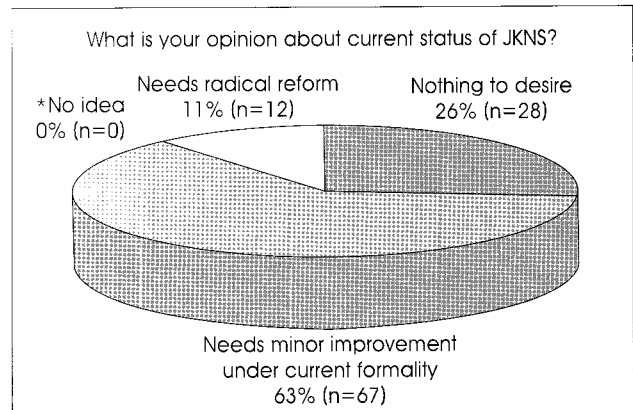


Fig. 5. Response to the question "In general, what is your opinion about current status of JKNS?".

necessity of electronic submission and review system was emphasized. There were controversies about publishing articles in Korean and optimal number of articles or issues.

Discussion

During the year 2000 and 2006 there has been many changes in JKNS. In addition to the change in formation of JKNS, several projects were done to improve the system of JKNS. Workshops for peer review of manuscripts, preparation of English manuscript, methods of statistical analyses were held in order to improve the process of peer-review and to help the authors to improve the quality of their manuscripts. Although it is obvious that remarkable improvement has achieved in status of JKNS, the quality of articles are still remains to be unsatisfactory. In this survey, overall result shows that the KNS members hold the same view about the situation in that manner. It is true that there are several factors for selection bias in this survey and the sample population is out of balance. However, we could see that the efforts to reformation of the journal in recent years have been supported by a number of KNS members who have interest in JKNS to a degree. And they hope that JKNS is to be indexed in internationally well-known database, such as Medline or SCI. The only way to accomplish this goal is improving the quality of articles of JKNS. Many members expressed the apprehensions that short term hereafter will be a crucial moment either to make continuous progress to be a top class journal or to collapse to be remained as an unnoticeable local journal. Their concern is quite reasonable in that JKNS have gained little improvement in impact factor provided by KoMCI for all efforts mentioned before. From now on, more hard work by authors and painstaking contribution of reviewers will be core elements to make journal of authority. A live issue such as electronic submission and review system or native English correction service attached to JKNS should be tied into as soon as possible. It needs hardly mention

that official journal is one of the most important measures of estimating the level of those academic societies. Unwavering support provided by the executives of the KNS and continuous interests devoted by the members of the KNS will help on reaching the goal of JKNS.

Conclusion

The efforts to improve the quality of JKNS were recognized by majority of members of the KNS. However, we could also discern the apprehensions and discontent in some KNS members about the quality of articles and review process.

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