

2003 GP&PHC Research Conference

'Primary Health Care Research: Evolution or Revolution?'

18-20 June 2003

Evaluation survey: results

The evaluation indicates the conference was a resounding success

340 delegates attended the conference and 173 delegates completed and returned surveys (51% response rate: 132 via the online survey; 41 handwritten via the paper survey). Overall ratings were excellent/good and the evaluation responses were mostly positive. Delegates praised the conference because:

- the content was diverse,
- the format was varied (including formal and informal sessions) and people could move between sessions,
- Keynote speakers were interesting, engaging and thought provoking,
- concurrent sessions and different types of presentations allowed access to a wide range of research, from snapshots of research through to more detailed descriptions,
- there were opportunities to hear of current research, meet the researchers and establish links and/or collaborative partners,
- there was a "very open and friendly atmosphere".

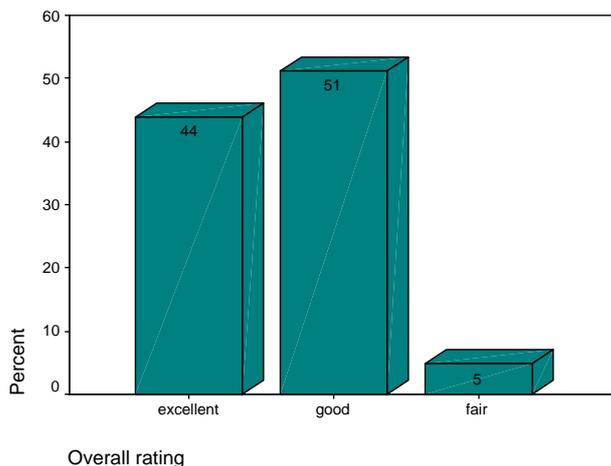
Many delegates reported they see it as the most important conference of the year.

"This is my ninth [GP&PHC Research] conference, so I can only assume I am an addict." (id 49)

Summary of results

1 Overall rating of conference

Overall, how do you rate the conference?



95% rated the conference as good or excellent.

"Content and format was good, not too heavy, not too light." (id 114)

"Fantastic. Yet again the GP&PHC Conference team has pulled off the best conference of the year!" (id 42)

"This is the most inspiring and enthusing conference of the year." (id 177)

"Good balance between keynote/plenary presentations and paper/poster presentations." (id 33)

"Rekindled my enthusiasm for incorporating research into our activities. Why: because I can see where research can be applied." (id 102)

"Too many didactic presentations, not enough participation by registrants." (id 113)

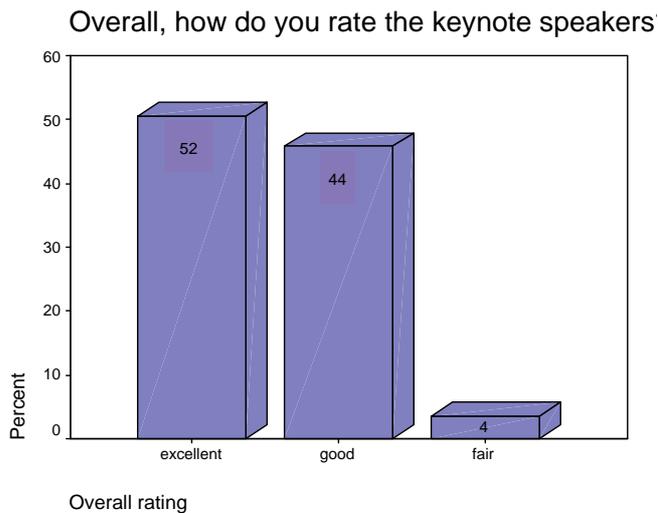
Respondents to the evaluation identified themselves as: (respondents could indicate more than one)

Researcher or Project Officer	Academic	GP	Policy Maker	Health practitioner	Consumer Rep.	Other
72	66	37	15	5	2	9

Work settings: (respondents could indicate more than one)

University	Division of Gen Practice	Private practice	Govt	Health service or hospital	RACGP	Other
107	23	23	22	7	3	10

2 Keynote speakers



96% rated the Keynote speakers as excellent or good.

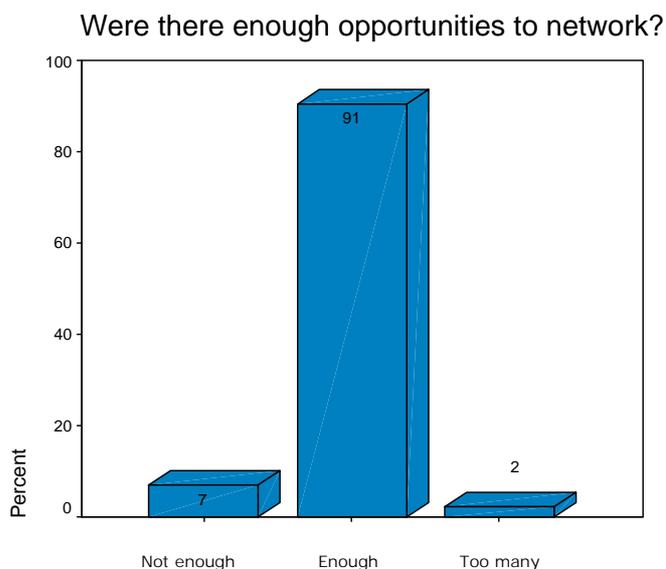
Many delegates singled out Bonnie Sibbald, Penny Hawe and Justin Beilby for praise as they were:

"refreshing", "excellent", "challenging", and "thought-provoking". Disappointment was conveyed about the need for a replacement speaker during one session.

"Thought that the keynote speakers were generally of high quality and provided a diverse range of views – they were stimulating." (id 123)

"The opening plenary was particularly good – well prepared and thought provoking" (id 72)

3 Networking



91% rated the conference as providing enough opportunities for networking (provided through the conference format, pre-arranged meetings, breaks).

'Networking', the opportunity to meet with others working in the same or related fields, was often cited as the best aspect of the conference. It is viewed as the forum for delegates to hear of research and be able to meet the researchers involved in order to interact and possibly establish new relationships or collaborations. Many delegates reported they would be following up on new research projects with those they met at the conference.

"New research links established [during conference] that will facilitate my research." (id 95)

4 Organisation, catering, venue

Delegates most frequently rated the organisation, catering and venue as good to excellent, although some respondents thought the quality and/or quantity of the food and tea/coffee could have been better. The handbook and website were rated as excellent, with new features implemented after last year's evaluation being welcomed. Suggestions for future conferences included:

- the program being available on the website earlier to assist in planning session attendance,
- being able to register at the pre-conference workshops or the night before the conference,
- areas for tea breaks to be larger to help movement/socialising/networking,
- ensuring nametags can be worn at a higher level, with names showing.

"Everything appeared to run very smoothly so the organisation of the event must have been done very well!" (id 41)

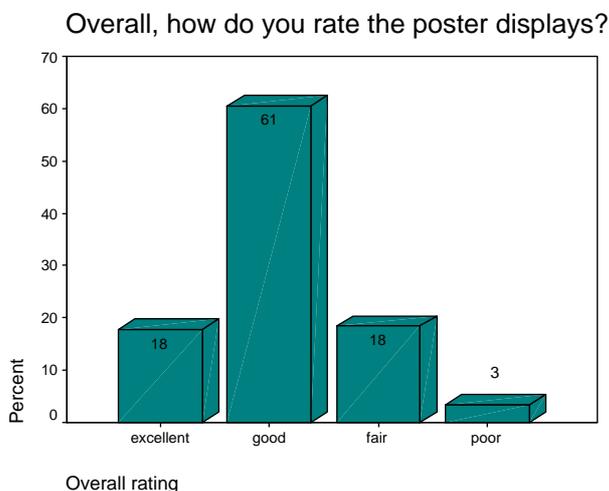
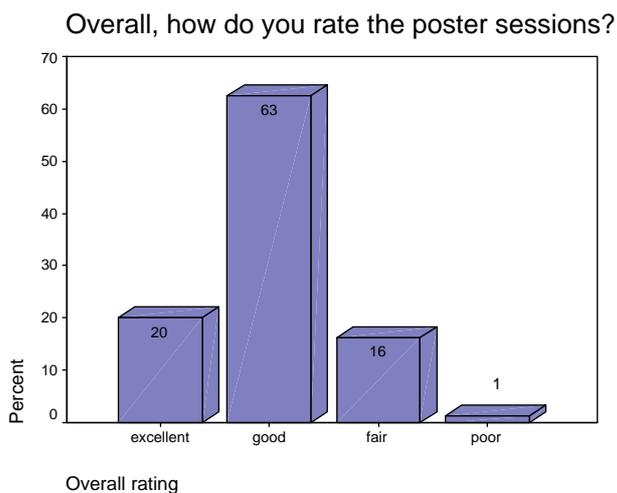
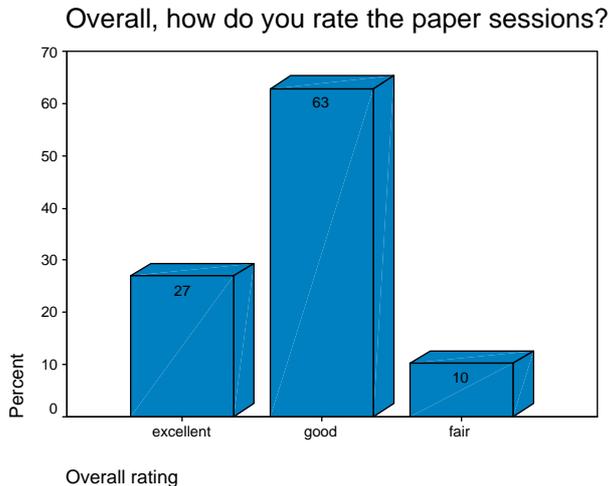
"IT support best ever" (id 195)

"I really love the online survey." (id 94)

5 Concurrent sessions

"The concurrent sessions always present a challenge – do I try to catch all the sessions that I think will be most interesting, or stay put in one room? You can't answer that but I do find it a challenge when there is so much of interest on offer." (id 37)

"My congratulations on the format of the conference – it kept it interesting!" (id 41)



90% rated the paper presentations as good or excellent.

There were mostly positive comments, although a number commented that papers were of variable quality (research or presentation); the time management of sessions could have been better (as some speakers went overtime, or there was a lack of Q&A time); and some would like to see presentation time reduced and Q&A time increased.

"I thought all presentations were useful – people had obviously put quite a lot of effort into preparing, and in many cases stimulated interesting discussion." (id 73)

83% rated the poster presentations as good or excellent

Respondents valued the range and diversity of research presented and the informal format of the poster sessions. Many suggested better time management of the sessions, more Q&A time, less posters per session, and more opportunities to be able to interact/network with the presenters.

"Again great stuff – lots of activity and high quality work." (id 42)

"Think there were too many posters, but no alternative given the interest." (id 63)

79% rated the display posters as good or excellent

While most respondents thought the quality of display posters was high (although some thought the research could have been better conveyed on the poster) the cramped location and time allocated (during breaks) meant most delegates ignored display posters. Authors of display posters felt they had put in a lot of effort creating the posters, to have them ignored and their authorship not included in the handbook.

"Posters were too wordy!!" (id 55)

"I didn't look at any of the display posters – I was too busy networking at the meal breaks" (id 91)

6 How well did the conference meet these objectives?

	A lot	Somewhat	Not at all
It raised my awareness of current primary health care research.	53%	45%	2%
It raised my ability to identify suitable research questions.	15%	67%	18%
It raised my ability to use appropriate methodologies.	15%	67%	18%
It raised my ability to undertake appropriate and relevant research.	23%	64%	13%
It raised my ability to develop and maintain ongoing partnerships.	40%	56%	4%

The conference was more successful at dissemination and raising awareness of current GP&PHC research, and facilitating the development and maintenance of ongoing partnerships. More attention needs to be given to the other objectives of increasing delegate's abilities to identify research questions, use appropriate methodologies, and increasing delegate's abilities to undertake relevant research. Delegates praised the diversity of research presented and reported on the benefits of not only hearing about research but also being able to meet with the researchers involved, and being able to locate their own research into the wider context.

"I liked the opportunity to get my research out there. Generated much interest and opportunities that can be followed up." (id 58)

Room for improvement:

For quality improvement, future conferences need to:

- Include longer discussion/participant interaction time during Plenary sessions, particularly Think Tank sessions
- Ensure strict time management of sessions (Chairs are already asked to do this, but there isn't always adherence)
- Include more presentations related to methodology
- Consider reducing the number of poster presentations per session
- Ensure poster display and tea break areas have plenty of room and posters kept on display for a longer period
- Invite a delegate to be Rapporteur
- Provide more computers for delegate email access
- Invite greater participation from the non-GP sector (i.e. nursing, social science, educators, the various therapies)
- Provide earlier access to the program and registration available at pre-conference workshops