

Practicing Physicians:

Questionnaire Design

The 2007 National Physician Survey (NPS) questions evolved from questions used on the 2004 NPS. A working group approach, including representatives from the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC), the Canadian Medical Association (CMA), the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada (RCPSC), the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI), and other affiliated societies was used to review and refine the 2004 questions. The refinement process included a call for content input. In particular, an effort was made to identify new areas of focus, with outreach to a wide range of medical associations/affiliates/groups, medical institutions, governments, research groups, etc. The rationale for the final questionnaire content was: 1) to repeat questions from the 2004 survey that were essential for longitudinal tracking; 2) to edit questions from the 2004 survey, to improve usefulness of the answers provided; 3) to put aside questions from the 2004 survey, where changes occur more gradually, and the 2004 results were still considered valid. These 2004 questions may be reconsidered for inclusion on later versions of the NPS questionnaire, e.g. 2010); 4) to add new questions in response to new and/or developing issues.

Similar to the Canadian Census approach of issuing a core questionnaire to be completed by the majority of respondents, and a more detailed questionnaire to be completed by a subset of respondents, the 2007 NPS consisted of multiple questionnaires. One version of the core questionnaire was developed, and two versions of the detailed questionnaire were developed - one for family physicians and general practitioners (FPs), and one for all other specialists. All of the content captured on the core questionnaire was also captured on the detailed questionnaires. Ninety percent of the questions on the detailed questionnaires were identical for FPs vs. all other specialists, with differences predominantly occurring in the clinical practice profile questions.

The questions were piloted in the fall of 2006 with a variety of physician committees and national specialty societies, and finalized in November 2006. The NPS received ethical approval from the University of British Columbia Behavioural Ethics Review Board.