



Janus Snapshots



The Janus Project
Family physicians
meeting the needs of
tomorrow's society

Le Projet Janus
Aider les médecins de famille à
répondre aux besoins de la
société de demain

Web-based tools

Use of medical databases, clinical practice guidelines, and on-line journals

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Continuing medical education and knowledge transfer from research to clinical practice are now facilitated by information technology in family medicine. Data from the 2004 National Physician Survey (NPS) show an increasing use of Web-based tools relative to year of graduation; 54.7% of physicians who graduated in 2000 or after use Web-based tools, compared with 41.2% of physicians who graduated between 1990 and 1999 and less than 35% of those who graduated before 1990. Physicians from Newfoundland (45.0%), Alberta (43.4%), and Saskatchewan (43.1%) are most likely to use Web-based tools; physicians from Quebec (28.2%), Prince Edward Island (31.1%), and Ontario (31.8%) are less likely to use these tools. More physicians who practise in isolated or geographically remote areas (49.6%) said they use Web-based tools than physicians in rural or urban areas (Figure 1). Among those who provided an answer to the question, the ratio of users over nonusers is 1.5:1 in isolated or geographically remote areas, whereas it is lower than 1.0:1 in most other settings.

These results show that use of information technology is increasingly integrated by new generations of Canadian family physicians. Use of Web-based tools, however, still varies between provinces. These tools seem to be more integrated into the practices of physicians from isolated or remote areas, which validates efforts to use information technology to facilitate access to health information. It is also likely that adoption of Web-based tools by younger physicians (who were exposed to such tools during their education and training) will encourage their senior peers to adopt these tools over the next few years.

The 2004 NPS is a unique collaborative project of the College of

Family Physicians of Canada, the Canadian Medical Association, and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. National-level estimates based on family physician results are considered accurate within $\pm 0.9\%$, 19 times out of 20. Detailed national analyses of the 2004 NPS results are available on the NPS website at www.nationalphysiciansurvey.ca.

If you would like to develop and write a future Janus Snapshot using the 2004 NPS results, please contact **Sarah Scott**, National Physician Survey and Janus Project Coordinator, College of Family Physicians of Canada; telephone 800 387-6197, extension 289; e-mail sksc@cfpc.ca.

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Use of Web-based tools among Canadian family physicians by practice location

