Guidelines for Survey Administration

Goals

1) Process: To facilitate the process by which surveys are administered to SOEM constituents, and maintain an appropriate frequency of distribution so as to not overburden the members of the listserv.

2) Quality: To ensure that high-quality surveys are administered to the AAP SOEM. Use of the SOEM listserv may be construed as implying endorsement of the survey by the Academy; therefore assuring that methodologically sound surveys is essential.

3) Research: This process will allow PEM researchers to collect timely data that may aid in obtaining pilot data, setting the stage for future research endeavors, publications, and/or grant submissions.

Eligible Surveys

Surveys that are eligible for submission to the AAP SOEM competition must meet the following criteria:

1) Relevant to the practice of pediatric emergency medicine
2) Developed and conducted by a physician group or institution; the submitter or senior investigator must be a member of the AAP SOEM
3) Not associated with a commercial gain or for profit
4) Free from potential corporate influence or undue bias
5) Not directly (arm’s length is allowed) influenced by granting agencies, or funded by an unconditional educational grant.

Submission Process

This process is administered by the Pediatric Emergency Medicine Collaborative Research Committee (PEM CRC), in conjunction with the AAP SOEM. Solicitation for submissions will occur via email notification every three months. Applications will only be accepted per these solicitations, and at the specified deadlines. The AAP SOEM Survey Application can be located on the AAP SOEM and PEM CRC websites. The application consists of 3 parts:

1) The survey application, including signed conflict of interest disclaimer;
2) A 2-page summary of the survey protocol, included background, objectives, methods, and potential impact
3) An electronic version (Word or PDF) of the survey with all items, including stems and responses.

Submissions should be emailed to Sue Tellez (stellez@aap.org) by 4:00pm Central Time of the cycle’s due date.
Review Process & Criteria

The application is screened by the Survey subcommittee chair for completeness and demonstration of appropriate rigor. Applications may be sent back for revision for next cycle if there is not documentation of rigorous item development and planning.

Applications remaining for a survey cycle is reviewed by the subcommittee: the PEM CRC’s Survey Study subcommittee consists of at least 6 members, including the Survey subcommittee chair, the PEM CRC chair, 3 PEM CRC steering committee members, and an at-large SOEM member.

The actual review form consists of the following criteria questions:

1. Are the goals & objectives of the survey clearly defined? - Surveys should be finite and transparent about the objectives for the study. Achieving those goals & objectives must lead to scientific impact within the field of PEM.
2. Is the survey likely to lead to future research? - Survey studies often serve as foundational or preliminary data for a larger investigation or initiative. Preference is given to surveys that not only satisfy a curiosity, but provide a well-laid out pathway towards a larger goal.
3. Is the survey appropriate for the SOEM listserv population? - The listerv for SOEM has a particular demographic profile that may induce bias in interpreting results.
4. Were the survey items generated in a methodologically rigorous manner? (e.g. item generation/reduction, pilot testing) - Evidence within the application must exist on the iterative processes that were undertaken to refine the items, format, and wording.
5. To what extent were the Validity and Reliability of the questionnaire appropriately tested? - The application must contain descriptions on how validity and reliability of the survey were established as a scholarly survey.
6. Does the submitted survey address the stated objective? - The items must all work together cohesively to address the initial goals & objectives.
7. Are the survey items clear and easy to understand? - The scales and anchors for items should be as unambiguous as possible, as well as for questions, descriptions, or vignettes. Particular attention should be paid to cultural differences (US & Canada) or regional and institutional practice patterns that affect responses.
8. Is the length & time needed for the survey appropriate for distribution? - The SOEM will not accept surveys that take beyond 20 minutes unless the yield from the data are substantial.

Reviews of survey submissions will be completed within approximately five weeks: total scores will be calculated, and reviewer comments collated. Applicants will be notified of results and feedback will be provided, to assist investigators in improving the quality of the survey, if accepted, or for possible resubmission.
Distribution

Distribution of the survey is also contingent on documented approval or exemption letter from the Principal Investigator’s institutional review board.

After final approval, accepted surveys will be granted exclusive access to the SOEM listserv for a period of three months.

In the case that multiple surveys are deemed adequate for distribution, the Survey Subcommittee will consider accepting more than one application, and holding the least time-sensitive survey for a future distribution period. In addition, investigators are permitted to resubmit their initial survey application for repeat review, after sufficient revision attention to initial reviewer feedback.

The subcommittee may recommend a smaller, more academic listserv within the PEM CRC subcommittee if that audience may be a better fit for the goals & objectives.

Guidelines for Survey Development

Several resources are available to assist prospective investigators in designing quality surveys. The review process is based on methodology as described by Burns et al in 2008; a link to this paper is available on the respective AAP and PEM CRC websites. A guide for the design and conduct of self-administered surveys of clinicians. Burns KE, Duffett M, Kho ME, Meade MO, Adhikari NK, Sinuff T, Cook DJ; ACCADEMY Group. CMAJ. 2008 Jul 29; 179(3):245-52

Examples of prior successful surveys accepted via this process will also be available to prospective applicants on the website.

While extensive validity and reliability testing are not required for acceptance, we have found that surveys that at least have some methodological assessment, beyond informal pilot testing, are of better quality. Therefore, we strongly recommend that investigators attempt to address content validity and test-retest reliability when possible, and that applications include detailed descriptions of these methods.

The survey selected as the “winner” based on total score will then have a 3-month exclusive window such that reminders can be sent to the membership. We anticipate notifying successful applicants 3 months prior to the first distribution of their planned survey. We will encourage the development of a standardized header that will clearly identify to the recipient that the survey has been endorsed by the AAP-SOEM and that it is the only survey that they will be requested to respond to for a 3 month period, thereby optimizing response rates.
**Maintenance of Anonymity**

The field of Pediatric Emergency Medicine consists of relatively few members (<1500), therefore it is extremely important to maintain the anonymity of the respondents. Individual respondents cannot be linked back to their surveys responses without consent. Thus all surveys must adhere to the following requirements.

1) Communication with individuals to solicit their participation should occur via standardized letters or emails, as provided by the AAP SOEM, which should mention the following concepts:

- Research ethics (IRB, REB) approval for the project has been obtained
- Responses will be kept confidential and all data will be securely stored
- Only grouped data will be analyzed and published
- No attempt will be made to identify individual participants
- Research personnel not involved in clinical practice (at arms' length from the investigators) will use an ID number linked to individuals only for the purpose of tracking and contacting non-responders or acknowledging responders
- Participants are free to choose whether to participate or not. There are no repercussions from not participating
- Completing and returning the survey implies the respondent's consent to participate

2) Personal solicitation for participation should **never** come directly from the investigator (phone calls, personal emails, face-to-face requests).

3) Tracking of responses and creation of non-responder correspondence (reminder cards, emails, phone calls) should be carried out by an individual at arms length from the investigator (e.g., a research assistant).

4) Investigators should never review survey responses that may contain information that would identify the respondent.

5) Databases containing identifying information should be kept separate from databases containing survey responses. A unique responder ID number may exist in each database for tracking purposes only.

6) Contact with respondents to clarify or expand responses should only occur if this was presented as a possible component of the research protocol in the initial correspondence AND the respondent has specifically consented to being contacted.

7) Once data entry and validation is complete, the unique responder ID number should be removed from both databases to prevent further linkages.
Reporting of Results

The results of AAP SOEM surveys will be of great interest to the membership; therefore live presentation of results to the membership is encouraged. Additionally, presentation of survey findings will allow member to become connected with the process, thereby increasing the visibility of the surveys, emphasizing their importance, and obtaining optimal participation and increased response rates. Listed below are the expectations for reporting of results for surveys distributed using this process:

1) ALL surveys are expected to be formally submitted and presented in a national forum, ideally annual AAP National Conference and Exhibition, within 2 years of distribution.

2) Presentation of results at one of the biannual PEM CRC meetings, is preferable, to confer response rates and success of the investigation. Contact between the Survey Subcommittee and PEM CRC Chairs, and the investigator, will be established prior these meetings to determine feasibility.

3) All successful applicants will be required to report the survey response rates to the Survey subcommittee chair once the survey has been completed.

Authorship

An Author is an individual who “participated sufficiently in the conception and design of the study and the analysis of the data (when applicable), as well as the writing of the manuscript, to take public responsibility for it.”¹ Sufficient participation means the individual made “substantial contributions to

(a) conception and design, or analysis and interpretation of data
(b) drafting the article or revising it critically for important intellectual content;
(c) final approval of the version to be published.

Conditions (a), (b), (c) must all be met.”² Other individuals who contributed to the work, but not substantially to justify authorship, may be named in the acknowledgement. Their function or contribution maybe described for example, “scientific adviser,” “critical review of study proposal,” “data collection,” or “participation in clinical trial.” Acknowledgements may be placed in the article as a title page footnote or as an appendix to the text. The selection of a survey for distribution to members of the AAP-SOEM does not require the inclusion of authors from the PEM CRC or the AAP SOEM.

1) Instructions for Authors. JAMA 1992; 268:41

Attribution

Abstracts and manuscripts that arise from a SOEM-sponsored survey are requested to acknowledge the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Emergency Medicine Pediatric Emergency Medicine Collaborative Research Committee.