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THE EDITOR'S CORNER

The 2007 JCO Orthodontic Practice Study

It's always gratifying to us to find that more than 600 orthodontists, and probably their staffs as well, would take time out from their full schedules to fill out our biennial JCO Orthodontic Practice Study questionnaire. These people are actually investing their time in their profession, because without their participation we wouldn't be able to gather enough data to publish the results. Since the first Practice Study was conducted in 1981, orthodontists and the institutions and manufacturers serving the specialty have come to rely on the JCO surveys as their barometer for the economic climate in the United States.

This year's readings have been somewhat mixed, as our reports over the past four issues have indicated. Although income and numbers of patients were up decisively from the previous Study, growth and busyness continued to decline. The national economic picture is not particularly encouraging, yet orthodontists say they have an adequate pool of adolescent patients, and they stay ahead of inflation by raising their fees in steady increments.

As a thank-you to our subscribers for their time spent in completing the survey, we try to publish all the important findings in our JCO articles. For many years, we printed the rest of the tables in an inexpensive paperback book. Now technology and the Internet have allowed us to make the complete tables available to our subscribers at no cost—you can download a PDF by clicking on the link on our home page at www.jco-online.com.

Besides supporting the specialty, there's another reason to fill out the survey questionnaire. From anecdotal reports, we hear that many practices use it as a basis for comparing their own economic and administrative status with that of their colleagues. Even if you chose not to return the questionnaire this year, you can still use the form by downloading it from our website. In fact, you can perform this exercise annually with your year-end data—and since the questionnaire doesn't change much from one survey to the next, you'll be ready for the 2009 Practice Study. Thanks in advance for your participation.

DSV