



BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network
Members' Satisfaction Survey

March, 2008

Completed by BCEOHRN Student Member Musarrat Nahid

1.0 Introduction

In December 2007 a survey link was sent to all members of the BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network to determine member satisfaction. The survey link was made available on the Network's home page for a period of about two weeks; an email alert was sent to the approximate 550 members to advise them of the survey:

"Members of the BC Environmental and Occupational Health Research Network,

Have your say!

*BCEOHRN is nearing the end of the third year of its four year funding mandate. At this time, we're asking all BCEOHRN members to take a few minutes to complete our members' satisfaction survey. **The Network's success depends on your valuable input for future planning.** The survey has been developed by BCEOHRN member and UBC School of Environmental Health MSc student, Musarrat Nahid. Our thanks to her for her work on this project!*

The link for the survey is: <http://vovici.com/wsb.dll/s/165cbq2f6cd>

We'd appreciate your response by December 15

Thank you for your feedback."

In order to get more responses, several attempts were undertaken. Paper copies of the survey were handed out at the annual general meeting (AGM) in January, 2008. An email notification was again sent to all members after the AGM to allow an opportunity for those members who could not complete the survey in December, 2007. The survey deadline was February 15, 2008.

2.0 Respondents

In total, 126 responses were received since the first commencement of the survey representing a 23% response rate. Of the respondents, the largest group were academic researchers (29.6% of 125). Other types of respondents were students (24% of 125), staffs (8.8% of 125), health care service providers (8% of 125), managers/executives (5.6% of 125), community researchers (5.6% of 125), policy makers (2.4% of 125) and people of miscellaneous occupations (16% of 125), [figure1]. The majority of the respondents (56.8% of 125) were affiliated with universities while the remaining were affiliated with health authorities (17.6 % of 125), provincial government (6.4 % of 125), voluntary agencies (5.6% of 125), private sector (1.6% of 125), college/institute (1.6% of 125), regulatory agency(0.8% of 125) and other miscellaneous types of organizations (9.6 % of 125) [figure2].

Choose one of the following options that best describes your profession

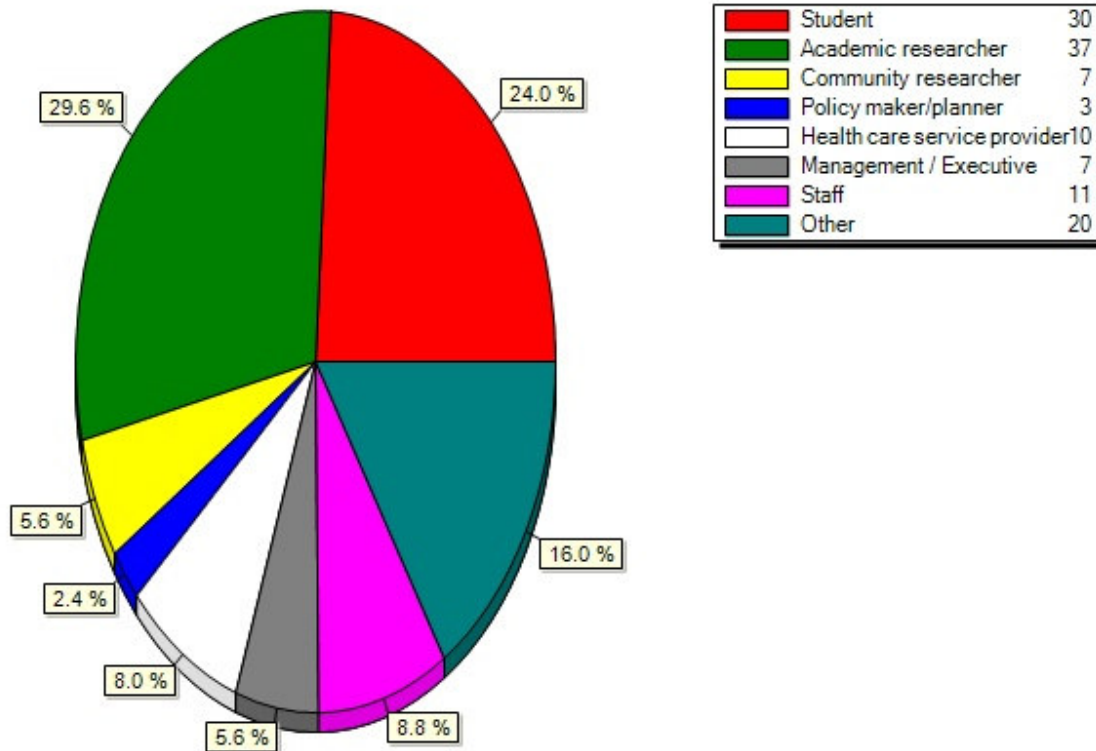


Figure 1

Which type of the following organizations are you affiliated with?

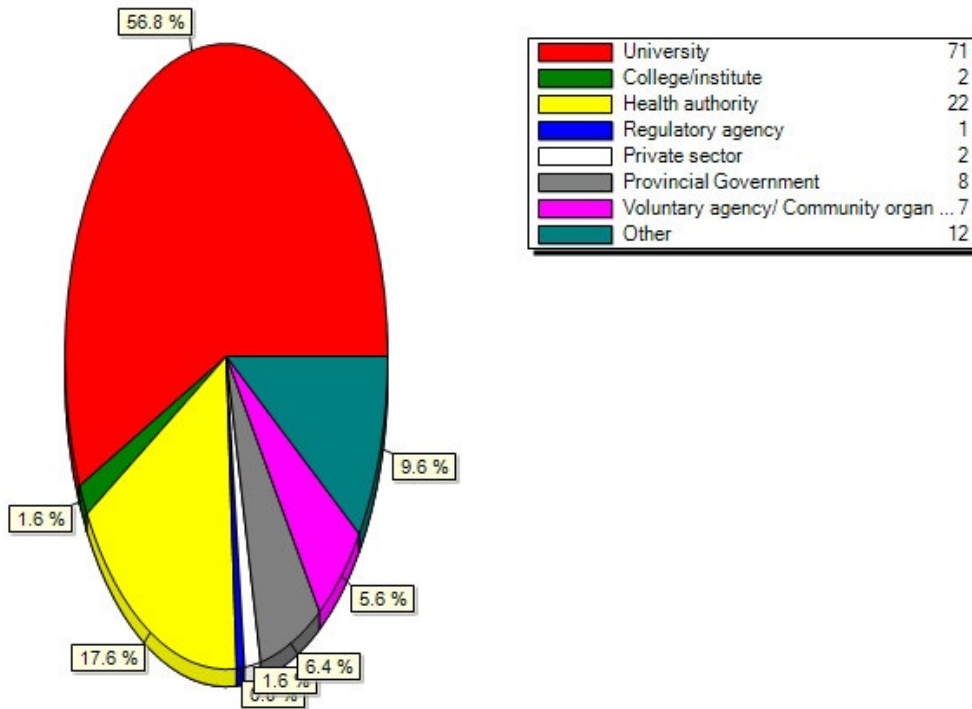


Figure 2

3.0 BCEOHRN Membership and Satisfaction

In terms of the reasons why they became members of BCEOHRN, the majority of the respondents stated that they wanted a platform to network with other researchers. Other popular reasons were to get information on upcoming conferences, grant competitions, job opportunities, to enhance research related skills, to receive BCEOHRN's research grants, to increase competence in receiving grants, and to build new research teams.

Overall, the majority of the respondents (67% of 124) were highly satisfied with BCEOHRN's services and 25.8% (32 of 124) others were somewhat satisfied (figure 3).

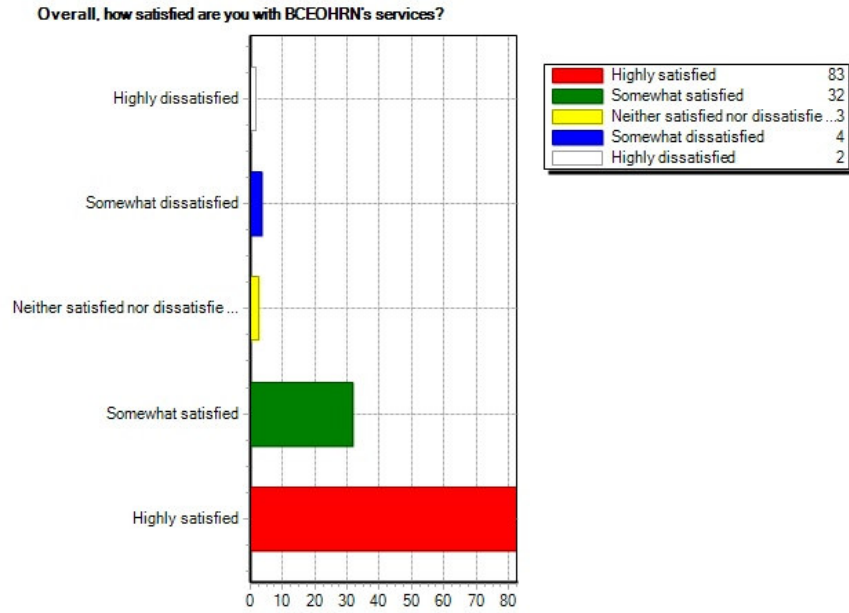


Figure 3

Most of the respondents (34.2% , 41 of 120) just agreed that BCEOHRN's services are supportive of their research activities, 33.33% (40 of 120) strongly agreed with that statement, and 28.3% (34 of 120) neither agreed nor disagreed with that statement [figure 4].

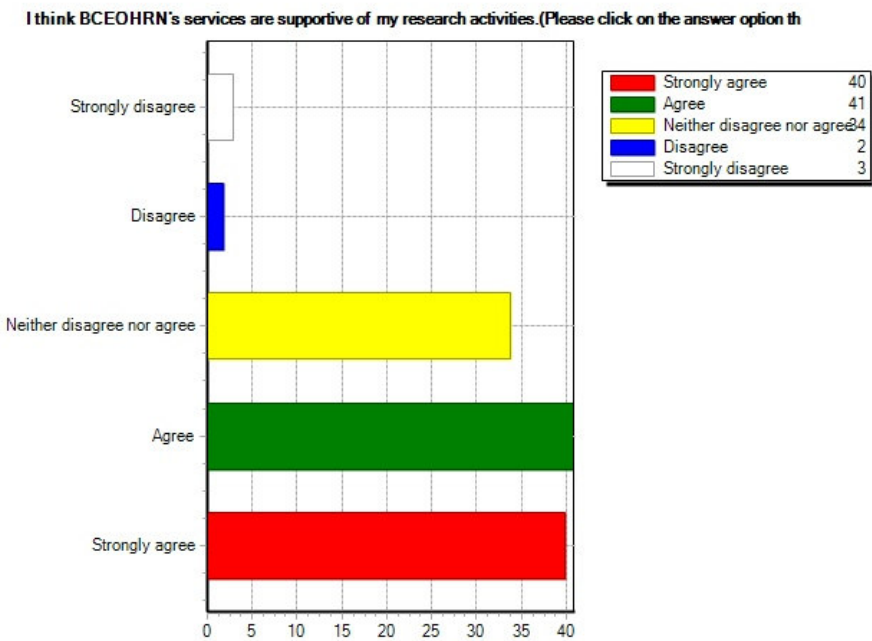


Figure 4

4.0 Members' Networking

Grant Success:

Among the respondents, 25.6% (32 of 125) received BCEOHRN's research capacity development grants. Of those research projects, 36.7% (11 of 30) were subsequently awarded other research grants.

Collaboration in BC:

Only a few of the respondents (21.1%, 26 of 123) were able to form research partnerships inside or outside BC through BCEOHRN. When asked how they came to know about those researchers/stakeholders, most of them said (36%, 9 of 25) said that they met them at the AGM, 28% (7 of 25) used the membership database, 12% (3 of 25) used the grey literature database, 8% (2 of 25) met them at the BCEOHRN workshops and 16% (4 of 25) used other ways. Of those who were able to form partnerships, 9 co-authored research papers with those researchers/stakeholders. A total of 17 of the research alliances applied for research grants; however, 10 of them succeeded in receiving the grants.

When asked about the extent to which BCEOHRN helped them to form new relationships, research collaborations, and/or increased their sense of connection to the occupational and environmental health research community in BC, 50% (61 of 122) said somewhat, 42% (51 of 122) said very much and 8% (10 of 122) said not at all (figure 5).

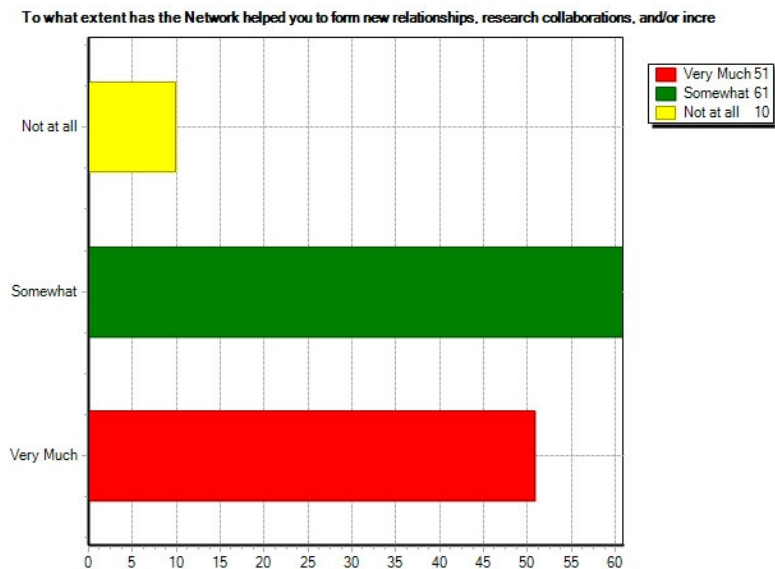


Figure 5

5.0 BCEOHRN Services

Mentorship program:

Most of the respondents (36.5%, 42 of 115) neither agreed nor disagreed with the idea that the mentoring program provides an opportunity to enhance one's research related skills; however, 26.1% (30 of 115) strongly agreed and 33.9% (39 of 115) just agreed with the idea.

The majority of the respondents (76%, 92 of 121) were not involved in the mentorship program (figure 6).

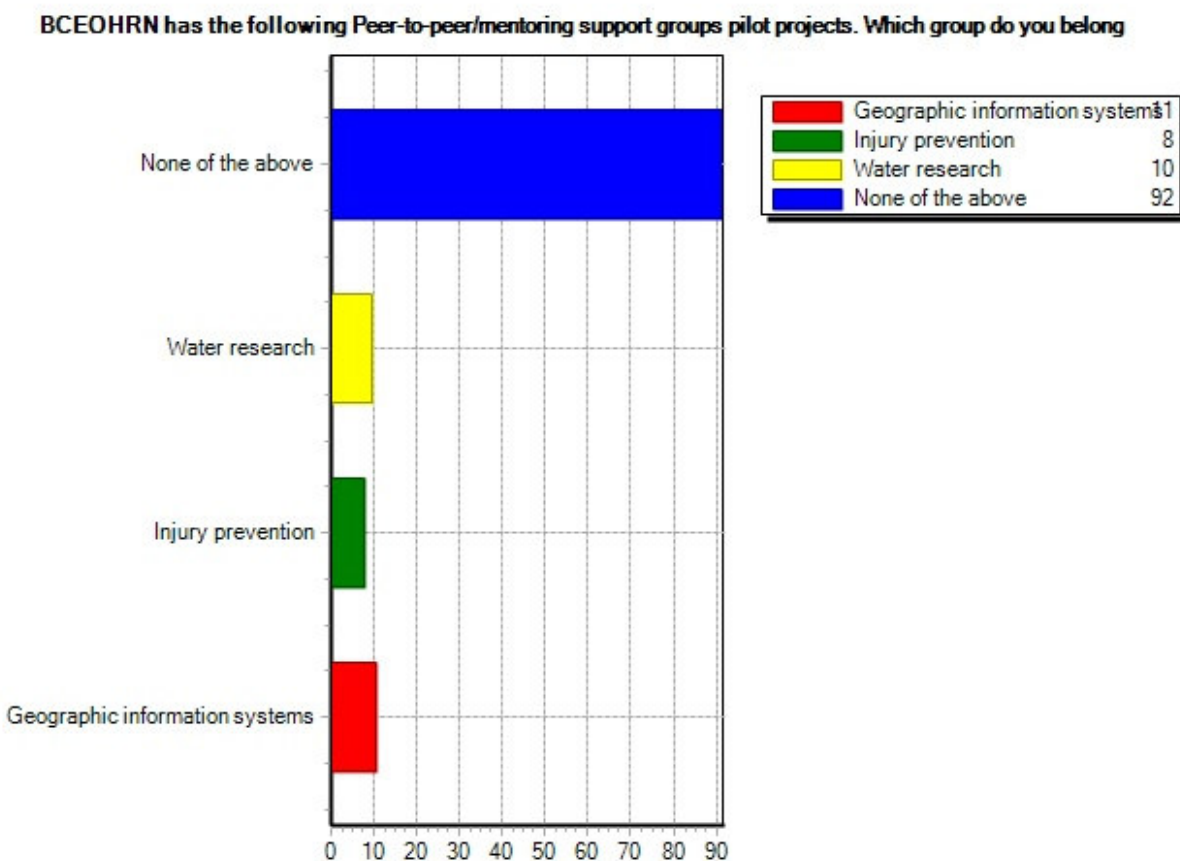


Figure 6

When participants belonging to the mentorship program were asked about how beneficial they found this program to their own research projects, most of them (37.5%, 12 of 22) said extremely beneficial, 25% (8 of 22) said somewhat beneficial, and 25% (8 of 22) said moderately beneficial and 12.5% (4 of 22) said not at all beneficial.

Some of the reasons why some respondents became mentors were to: help guide new researchers; help students in the field of occupational and environmental health; help build

capacity in the province; give something to the network; and, make connections with mentees/other mentors, share one's knowledge etc.

Knowledge translation:

About 33.3% (36 of 108) of the participants submitted a policy paper or made a presentation out of their research projects to relevant stakeholders (e.g., funding agency, regulatory body). Most of them (45.7%, 16 of 36) did not find BCEOHRN useful in this regard. However, 20% (7 of 35) found BCEOHRN extremely useful and 20% (7 of 35) found BCEOHRN somewhat useful in this regard.

Other Services:

AGM: Most of the respondents strongly agreed with the idea that the AGM is a useful event to meet new researchers or stakeholders (45.8%, 55 of 120). Most of the respondents also agreed with the idea that the AGM provides an opportunity to form new research alliances (37.2%, 45 of 121). 61.8% (76 of 123) of the respondents said they attended the AGM. Most of the respondents (97%, 66 of 68) who attended the AGM found it useful.

Membership database:

Most of the respondents (41.5%, 51 of 123) strongly agreed with the idea that they would certainly look into the membership database if they would like to build a research team; 38.2% (47 of 123) just agreed with that idea.

When the respondents who belonged to the mentorship program were asked about how useful the membership database was in connecting the mentor with a mentee, 31.6% (6 of 21) said extremely useful, 26.3% (5 of 21) said not at all useful, 21.1% (4 of 21) said somewhat useful and 21.1% (4 of 21) said moderately useful.

Grey literature database:

Most of the respondents (37.8%, 45 of 119) just agreed with the idea that the grey literature database is a wonderful tool to learn about other researchers; however 32% (8 of 119) strongly agreed and 27% (32 of 119) neither agreed nor disagreed with that idea.

Research capacity development grant:

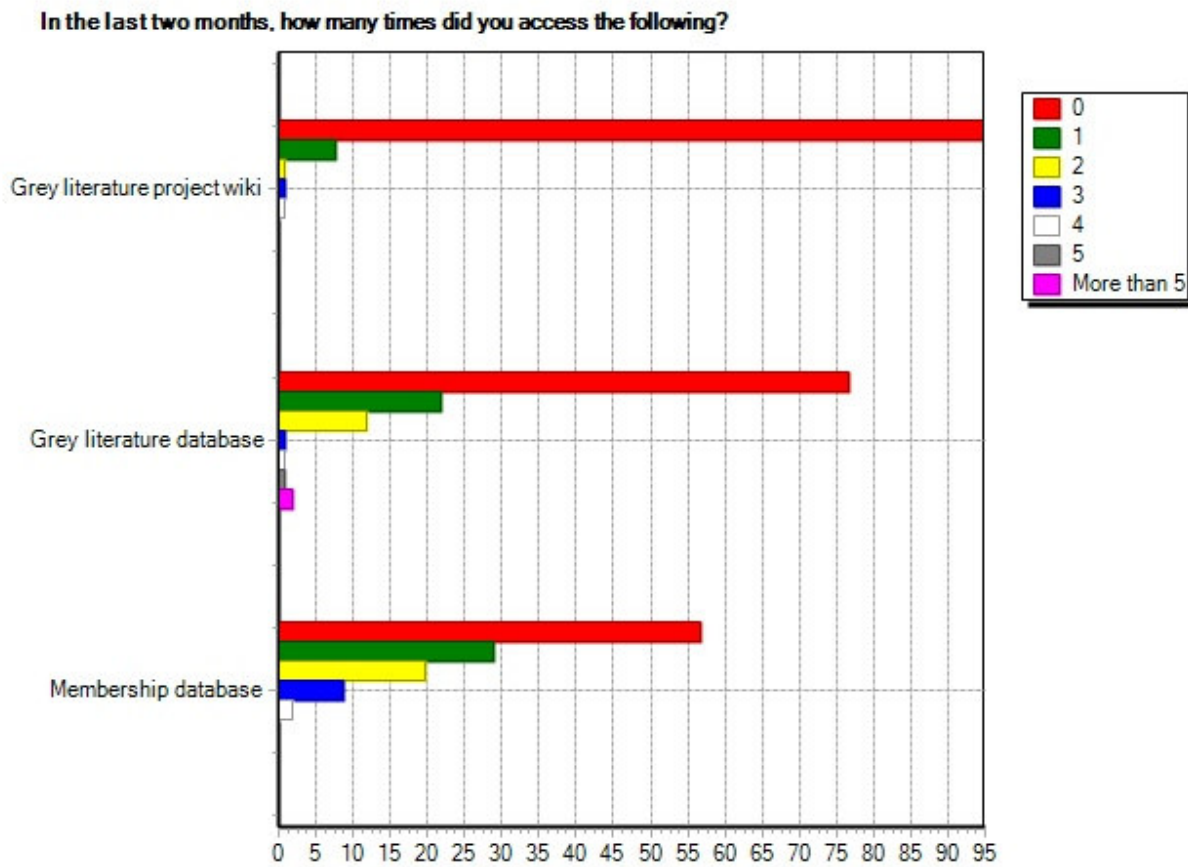
The majority of the respondents (52.5%, 65 of 120) strongly believed that BCEOHRN's research capacity development grant is a great support for researchers, 29% (35 of 120) just agreed with that idea.

Message board on the BCEOHRN's website:

Most of the respondents (42.4%, 50 of 118) were indifferent to the idea that the message board serves as a platform for interaction with other researchers; 27% (32 of 118) just agreed and 21% (25 of 118) strongly agreed with that idea.

Bi-weekly e-newsletter: The most popular reasons to access this service were to get information about upcoming conferences / seminars / workshops, funding opportunities and jobs.

In general, the frequency of accessing some of the services is depicted below:



The following table depicts how some of the services of BCEOHRN are viewed by the respondents:

	Highly beneficial	Moderately beneficial	Somewhat beneficial	Not at all beneficial	Have never used/ applied/ attended
Scientific Exchange & Annual General Meeting	47.9% (56)	19.7% (23)	4.3% (5)	0.9% (1)	27.4% (32)
Membership database	19.8% (23)	32.8% (38)	16.4% (19)	1.7% (2)	29.3% (34)
Grey literature database	12.2% (14)	21.7% (25)	13.9% (16)	3.5% (4)	48.7% (56)
Research capacity development grant	23.1% (27)	8.5% (10)	4.3% (5)	4.3% (5)	59.8% (70)
Travel Bursaries to attend BCEOHRN Events	21.6% (25)	6.0% (7)	0.0% (0)	6.0% (7)	66.4% (77)
Networking Facilitation Funds	15.8% (18)	5.3% (6)	0.9% (1)	7.0% (8)	71.1% (81)
Knowledge translation workshop	26.1% (29)	10.8% (12)	3.6% (4)	0.9% (1)	58.6% (65)
Mentorship program	9.8% (11)	11.6% (13)	5.4% (6)	4.5% (5)	68.8% (77)
Bi-weekly e-newsletter	43.1% (50)	32.8% (38)	12.9% (15)	0.9% (1)	10.3% (12)
Web-Ex (teleconferencing/videoconferencing/real time file sharing)	27.2% (31)	9.6% (11)	6.1% (7)	1.8% (2)	55.3% (63)
Message board on the website	8.0% (9)	15.2% (17)	8.0% (9)	7.1% (8)	61.6% (69)

Ideas about how BCEOHRN might improve any of its services:

- Increase BCEOHRN's visibility among BC health authorities; these organizations may not be fully aware of BCEOHRN's capability in supporting occupational and environmental health research.
- May create open (but moderated) subject forums that could be initiated by members under anonymous identities, to facilitate discussion, problem-solving, networking and partnerships in any number of areas.

- BCEOHRN needs to network more with labour and environmental advocacy groups. Lasting knowledge translation generally results in policy change. For policy change one needs allies.
- Provide quarterly workshops, symposia.
- Provide complete computer conferencing (rather than phone/computer conferencing).
- Perhaps provide the opportunity of a list serve instead of getting members to go on the message board.
- More effort is needed to reach out to the audience outside academia
- More information should be readily available on mentorship program, more face to face meeting needed
- Need less paper handouts at AGM, less talk on mentorship program at AGM
- Job/volunteer opportunities for recent graduates or students should be included in the monthly newsletter

Some suggestions about what BCEOHRN might do to assist members in their research:

- To allow funding to cover pilot research and analyses. Having baseline data allows researchers to demonstrate evidence of need for research in a larger grant.
- More funding opportunities for pilot projects (monetary value greater than research capacity development grants).
- Grant writing workshop.
- It would be interesting to have an Aboriginal interest group-- people of Aboriginal ancestry who plan Aboriginal research projects.
- Provide help on finding individuals who might help in research in aboriginal mental health.
- More grants/funds needed for students for conference attendance, workshop attendance and initiating pilot projects
- Academics should talk a bit more on research topics that community and workplace activists can join in
- Provide assistance on grant writing
- Create a facility sharing link of members to use laboratory machines to support research.
- Need more research on social sciences