



CME reduction redux: While less isn't more, it's better than none

Beginning in January 2002, it was necessary for the *Journal* to reduce the number of free Continuing Medical Education (CME) credits allowed per issue from the previous 2 hours to 1 hour, as we explained in an editorial in the January issue. Since then we have received 12 comments about this change in policy. These comments represent about 0.5% of our monthly CME participants.

As you might expect, enthusiastic acceptance of this reduction in allowable CME credit has not been unanimous. One highly qualified internist, who told us he graduated from medical school second in his class, wrote that he has “never taken this evaluation in less than 2 hours, often over 3 hours.” Another felt that we “must have extremely quick readers...I routinely spend 2+ hours on the journal.” Another wanted to know, “Who the hell are the people who deal with CME, and why should we listen to them?”

In that regard, whether we like it or not, we have to follow the procedures established by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education in order to maintain our accreditation to grant CME credit. We believe that 1 hour of CME credit is better than none, and—don't forget—it's free! One reader agreed, writing, “1 CME or 2 CMEs! Keep up the good work!”

How should we interpret this response from you, our valued readers? Although 12 comments (11 negative) does not exactly represent a landslide, we believe that for every one of these respondents there is likely to be a far greater number who did not feel moved to write about their distress. Accordingly, we will periodically repeat our timed CME test-taking studies and grant more credit in the future if the results justify it. In the meantime, we appreciate your support and understanding.

Another, albeit smaller, change in the *Journal's* CME offerings is also in store. Beginning in July, readers who submit completed tests will receive their CME certificates on a postcard rather than with a letter in an envelope. This change will allow the *Journal* to reduce our CME mailing and processing costs, which will help us continue to offer CME free of charge. We hope the postcard approach will also enable readers to more easily recognize their CME certificates within the rest of their mail.

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