

# WCET® 2023 membership survey results: reviewing the past and planning the future

### ABSTRACT

The WCET® prides itself on consulting its membership, and the membership survey is the main method of ensuring we give all members the opportunity to have a say in the future of the WCET®. The response rate to the 2023 survey was considered low, therefore we present here the main results in comparison to previous years. The strategic plan for the next 4 years has been discussed and approved by the Executive Board (EB) based on the last 10 years of survey results (2013–2023). We thank you for your participation.

**Keywords** WCET® membership, membership survey, strategic planning, stoma, continence, wound

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### INTRODUCTION

It has been 4 years since the last WCET® membership survey, the last being conducted in 2019<sup>1</sup>. Previously, members were surveyed every 2 years<sup>2-4</sup>. The rationale for this change was based on the 2020 constitution revision, extending the Executive Board (EB) term from 2–4 years; consequently, 2023 marks the end of our 4-year strategic plan. We strongly believe that the 2023–2027 strategic plan should address the issues raised by the results and comments of the membership survey.

### METHOD

Initially the EB reviewed the 2019 survey questions for clarity and relevance, and determined that no significant changes were necessary. As some language translations were lost during movement to our new management company, we proceeded to request Bahasa Indonesia, Chinese, French, Portuguese and Spanish translation reviews. Our deepest gratitude goes to Michelle Lee from Hong Kong, China for the Chinese translation, to Laurent Chabal from Switzerland for the French, to Dr Vera Lucia Conceicao de Gouveia Santos from

Brazil for the Portuguese, and to Heidi Marie Hevia Campos from Chile for the Spanish.

The 2023 membership survey was made available electronically to all members to complete between 13<sup>th</sup> January and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2023. Several methods of communication were used to ensure that members were aware that the survey was scheduled, to let them know how important their feedback is to the WCET®, and how their feedback might be utilised. We also wanted to let them know that the survey results would be anonymous. The same individuals back-translated survey responses into English. Susan Barber, Director of the WCET® Management Company, then sorted and tabulated the responses into one set of results.

For the first time in the membership survey history, this 2023 publication also considers the membership profile, as categorised by the WCET® constitution<sup>5</sup>. Data from the membership database, as of 18<sup>th</sup> January 2023, provided an insight into membership status at the time of the survey. To provide our members with a broader overview, we then compared the 2023 results to previous years<sup>1-4</sup>, giving a 10-year perspective, thus increasing their relevance. The data is presented using descriptive statistics.

### RESULTS

Despite our efforts, the response rate was one of the lowest we have ever received, only 20% of our membership database responding.

#### Membership profile

The WCET® has members in 62 countries. Life members constitute 0.5% of the total database, 2% are commercial

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members, 3.6% associate members, 4.3% International Delegates (IDs) and 90% full members. Most of them paid their membership subscription for a 4-year period (45%), followed by those who subscribed for 2 years (29%), 3 years (18%) and 1 year (8%). Almost 50% of responders reported they had been a member of the WCET® for 5 years or less, while 24% stated they had been members for more than 15 years (Figure 1).

Despite the survey being provided in five languages, 69% of participants responded in English, which is higher than previous years when it ranged from 24–50%. Most of our members responded that they work full time (75%), at a hospital (62%), and have more than 6 years of experience (85%), which is aligned with previous years (Figure 2). They are most likely to practise in the tri-specialty of stoma, wound and continence (36%), while no respondents practise in continence alone (Figure 3). The majority have been trained through a WCET® recognised Enterostomal Therapy Nursing Education Program (ETNEP) (59%). However, some participants still declare that they have received no training at all as “it is not required for the job” (5%) (Figures 4 & 5).

When enquiring about how members had first heard of the WCET®, most respondents mentioned a non-technological method such as from a colleague or teacher, at a conference or via another association (82%).

### What members value the most

The top six most valued WCET® resources remain similar over all the surveys from 2013 to 2023. The WCET® Congress, the WCET® Journal, the website, *bulletin*, and specialised education programs (ETNEP) and WCET® Recognised Education Programs (REPs). Educational webinars and our education publications such as the WCET® pocket guides and tool kit were new entries in 2019<sup>1</sup> and 2023 (Figure 6).

### WCET® Biennial Congress

It is of interest to report that, despite the MedTec rules<sup>6</sup> which were implemented in 2018, and the COVID-19 crisis (2020–2022), 23% of responders were sponsored for Congress by industry in 2022, while 35% self-paid. The main barrier to attending a WCET® Congress, beside the distance (27%), was again the lack of funding (38%). Table 1 compares data from previous surveys. Responders reported that they valued attending the sessions provided by specialised ETs (40%), the sessions provided by other experts in the field (27%), the poster sessions (17%), and the opportunity to present at Congress (15%).

Table 1. Compared data about the WCET® Biennial Congress %

Survey results (%)	2013 <sup>4</sup>	2015 <sup>3</sup>	2017 <sup>2</sup>	2019 <sup>1</sup>	2023
<b>Financial support for attending the congress</b>					
Sponsored by industry	26	26	22	24	23
Self-paid	49	39	40	51	35
<b>Restrictions to attending the congress</b>					
Distance	43	25	56	48	27
Lack of funding	73	40	41	43	38

### WCET® Journal

The WCET® Journal, produced in five languages, has always been voted one of our most valued resources. It is a quarterly, scientific, peer reviewed publication, indexed to Nursing and Allied Health Literature (CINAHL)<sup>7</sup>, Embase<sup>8</sup>, InfoRMIT Health<sup>9</sup> and EBSCO<sup>10</sup>. Most participants (64%) still wish to receive the journal as a hard copy, although only the English version is printed. A comparison to previous surveys are shown in Table 2.

### WCET® bulletin

The *bulletin* is the WCET® members’ news magazine, publishing stories and updates about individual, organisational, national and international events, celebrations and achievements. It has gradually grown in popularity since 2013 (84%) to 98% in 2023.

### WCET® ETNEP/REP

The WCET® currently recognises 70 ETNEP/REPs globally; 95% of responders valued help with developing programs and their recognition, which is higher than in 2013 (86%). Most of the respondents (25%) had heard about the WCET® at their specialised postgraduate training program (refer to Table 2 for comparison to past survey results). Many thanks to all ETNEP/REP directors for taking the opportunity to present the WCET® to your students; we are very honoured and feel very blessed. Please continue to promote our mission and vision.

### Educational resources – webinars and pocket guides

WCET® webinars commenced in 2016; by 2019 97% of responders valued them. The COVID pandemic drove an increase in virtual events and in 2023 99% of responders found them of value. The other educational resources, such as pocket guides, are also valued (97%).

### NNGF® scholarships

Most participants reported to know about the NNGF® and its scholarships (79%), which is similar to previous results (see Table 2).

Table 2. Comparison of data from previous surveys %

Survey results (%)	2013 <sup>4</sup>	2015 <sup>3</sup>	2017 <sup>3</sup>	2019 <sup>1</sup>	2023
Importance of having a hard copy of the WCET® Journal mailed	74	55	56	54	64
Have heard about the WCET® at their ETNEP training	34	36	32	30	25
Awareness of NNGF® scholarships	82	75	77	75	79
Visit the WCET® website more than every 3 months	32	48	59	64	63
Get regular information from their ID	7	39	15	53	49
• More than once a month	3	11	5	18	24
• At least every 3 months	4	28	10	35	25

### Website and social media

A total of 63% of participants state that they visit the website regularly, more than every 3 months, which is a great increase since the last membership survey results (Table 2). The top four areas of the website to be visited are the *WCET® Journal*, both current and back issues, congress information, webinars and the *bulletin*.

A total of 62% of members reported that they follow us on social media, compared to 47% in 2019<sup>1</sup>.

### Information from the IDs

As previously mentioned, the implication of IDs is monitored through the surveys; 49% of the respondents had heard from their ID at least every 3 months while 24% reported never hearing from their ID. We encourage IDs to continue their efforts, which are very much appreciated, especially as we are all volunteers and most have full time jobs (see Table 2).

### Members' expectations

The majority of responders (98%) report that the WCET® meets their expectations (Figure 7); this is similar to previous surveys. The free text feedback was wonderful. Here are some quotes; your guidance will provide the motivation to keep moving forward.

- "WCET® already does a fantastic job."
- "I THINK WCET® IS DOING THE BEST."
- "The team do a great job. Thank you for providing this resource and regular conferences to keep us up to date."
- "Executive leadership is great."
- "Thank you to all the volunteers who have done a great job for WCET®. The journal and the Bulletin are an excellent source of knowledge – I love the new format. Enjoy reading what members are doing in different parts of the world".
- "You are great!"

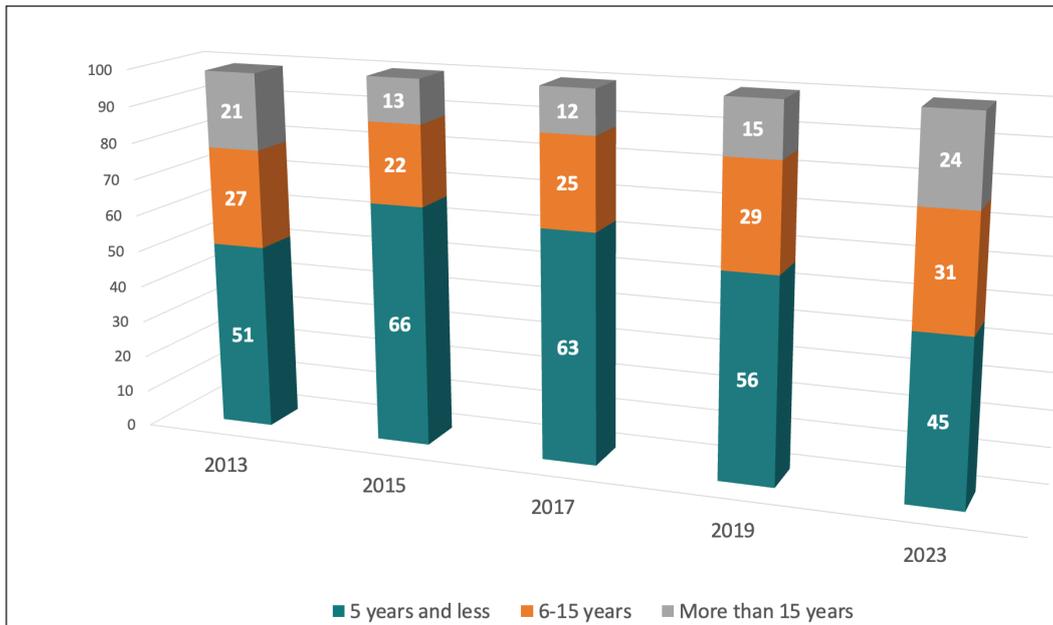


Figure 1. Years of WCET® membership length (%)

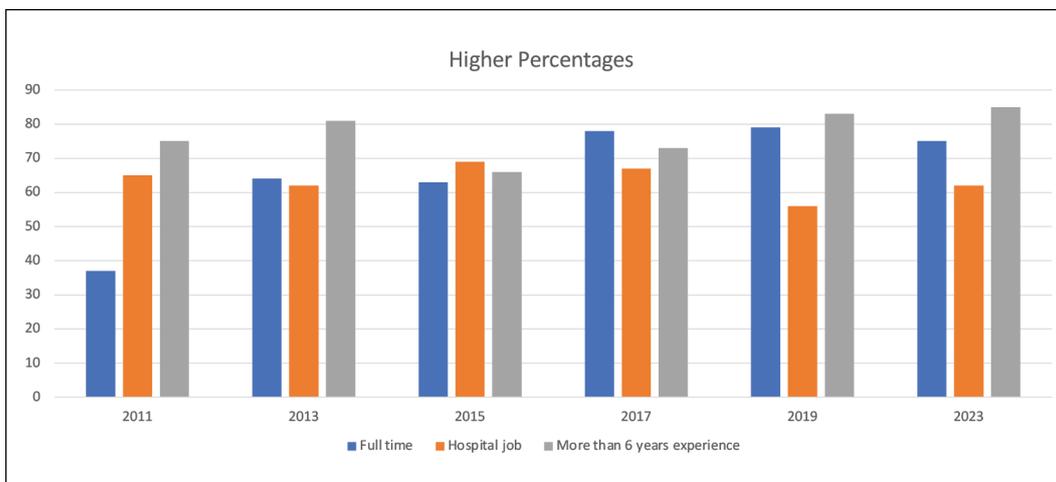


Figure 2. Scope of practice, type and years of experience, by majority (%)

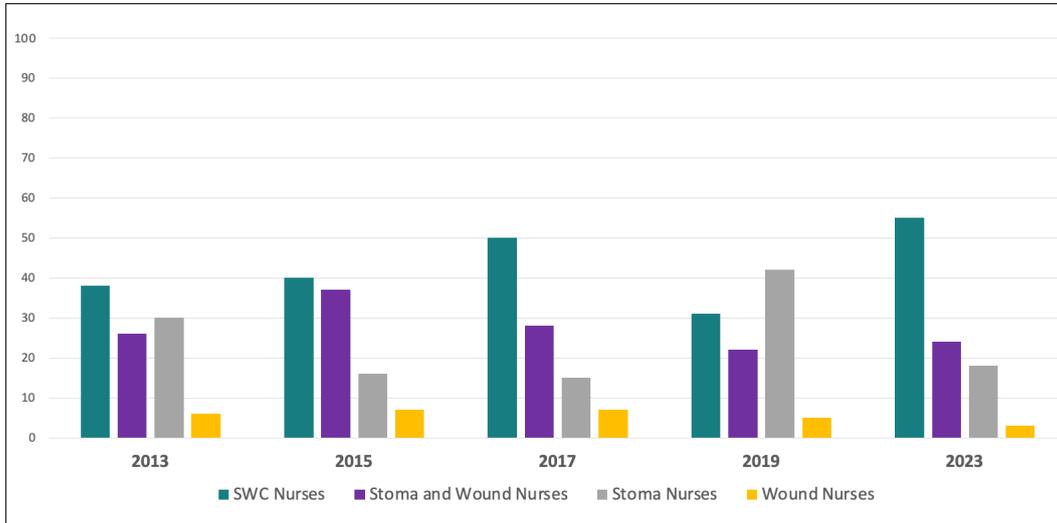
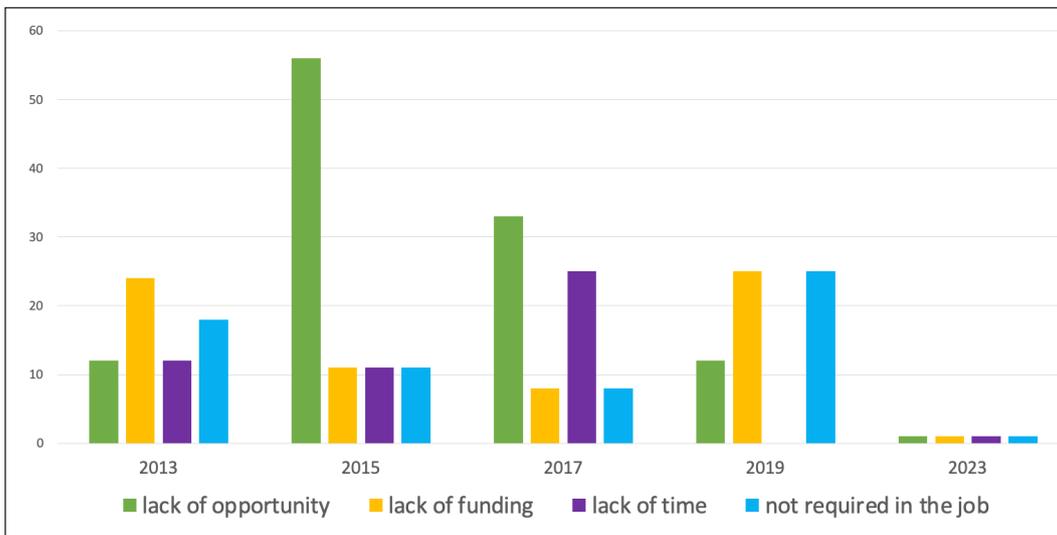
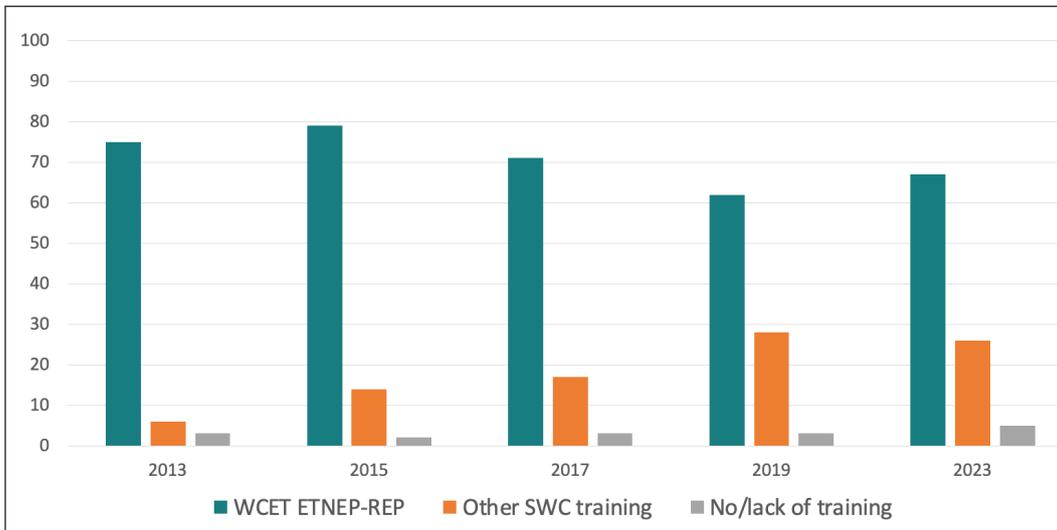


Figure 3. Scope of practice by specialty %



Figures 4 & 5. Type of specialised training and reason given for no training %

- “You are just excellent.”
- “Thanks for your work.”

## DISCUSSION

The low response rate compared to previous years was most likely due to the short notice given to members to complete; in previous years the survey was accessible for up to 5 months<sup>3</sup>. The time was restricted for several reasons, the incoming EB nominations and consequent election was being prepared, and we did not want to bombard members with too many issues to respond to at the same time. We also required the survey results to drive our strategic planning session at our annual face-to-face meeting in August 2023. Additionally, most of our members renew their membership at the beginning of the year, therefore we may have missed some members who were not financial at the time. Post-COVID-19 pandemic issues and the economy may have also played a role. It was wonderful to learn that 24% of responders had been members for more than 15 years; we thank our long-term members for their loyalty and support.

It is of some concern that the four other than English language questionnaires were poorly responded to. Again, this may be due to the inability of WCET® EB and its members to travel; meeting people face-to-face has always increased membership numbers. The post-COVID pandemic burn-out and economy may have also played a part.

### Congress

After 4 years we finally will be able to have a full face-to-face Congress. For the third time in WCET® history it will be a joint venture – 2010 and 2022 were both organised with our WOCN® colleagues. We cannot wait to see you all in Glasgow next September – please stay tuned for more information regarding this exciting and promising joint WCET®–ASCN UK event (<https://wcet-ascnuk2024.com>).

### WCET® Journal

The *WCET® Journal* remains our most popular resource with members, although we have had some problems with mailing addresses, and the hard copy is only available in English. With the help of our management company, who have

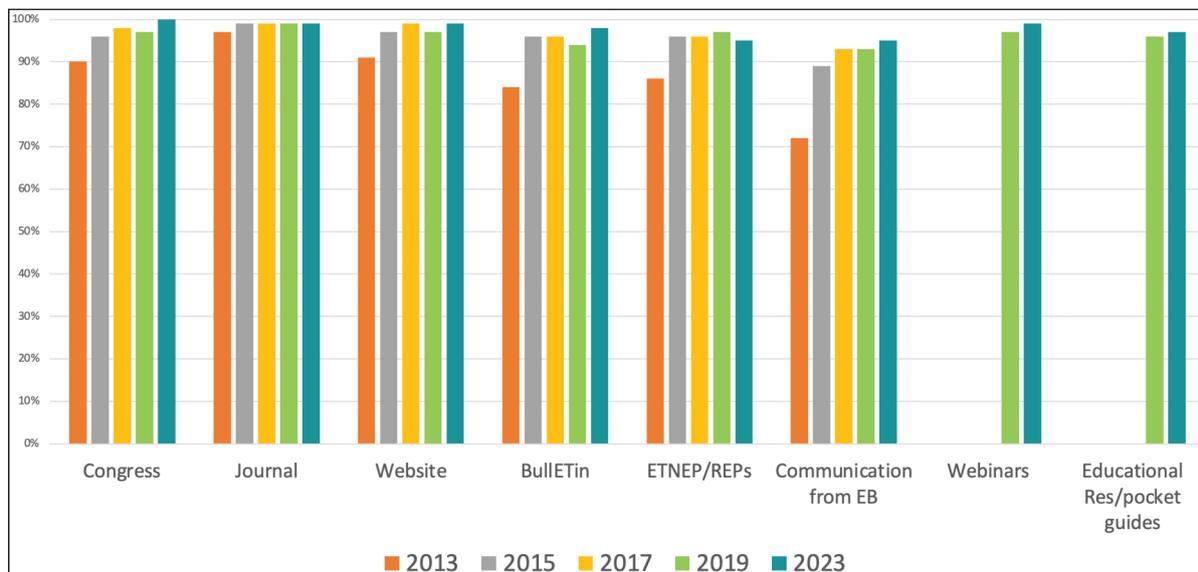


Figure 6. Greatest WCET® strengths (2013–2023)

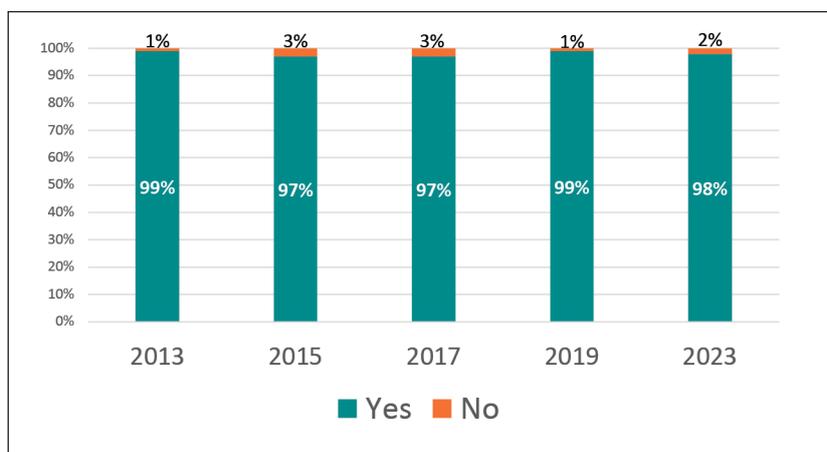


Figure 7. Does the WCET® meet your expectations?

cleaned up our membership database, and the help of all of you who have updated your online profile, it seems that less journals are sent back to our publisher than in previous years. Translation into our top five membership languages is unanimously appreciated. Please remember that these are professional translations which are costly, but mandatory as the Journal has an International Standard Serial Number (ISSN) and is indexed. It is one of the only journals available in five languages, which is very impressive and should allow authors a wider global readership for the scientific publications. We would like to appreciate our Journal Sustaining Partners (AROA™, Calmoseptine®, Coloplast, ConvaTec, Dansac, Hollister®, Welland and Wound Care Plus) for their annual contribution allowing us to provide this important resource which contributes to keeping us all up to date. A special thank you goes to Calmoseptine® and Coloplast for their support in the translation costs; we greatly appreciate your support.

We would like to invite you and/or your colleagues to submit scientific manuscripts, which will not only enhance the journal's quality, its impact factor and hopefully allow it to be MEDLINE indexed, but also ensure our authors and their work are better known, and cited, globally.

### ETNEPs / REPs

Since its inception, the WCET® mission has been to promote specialised education worldwide, the aim being that patients worldwide benefit from expert care, from nurses trained in our tri-specialty, armed with updated knowledge and skills. One of the WCET® Education Chairperson's main roles is to coordinate the review of ETNEP/REP recognition and re-recognition, including site visits, advise on new programs, and to give WCET® recognition to the schools/universities which have successfully met our minimum standards. The Education Chair will also deliver WCET® certificates to the recognised schools/universities, and to the graduate students at the request of recognised ETNEP/REP Directors. The education committee is a very large, busy and productive committee; members are a diverse group of ETs from around the globe which is one of its many strengths.

While we recognise that the COVID pandemic will have made it difficult for nurses to enter training programs, we are saddened to know that some administrators still do not believe that a specialty qualification is "required for the job". We will continue to attempt to reach not only clinicians but administrators to demonstrate the worth of ET or wound ostomy continence qualifications. We also take this opportunity to highlight that our WCET® 2020 International Ostomy Guideline states, in recommendation 1.1, that "Specialised training is required to effectively provide care to a person with an ostomy including their families"<sup>11</sup> (Evidence level A). This is also true for wound and continence care.

### Education resources

It is wonderful to note that members value the webinars and educational publications (such as the WCET® pocket guides and toolkit). These two resources were not previously available and

so we believe that this confirms that we are basing our strategy around your survey results. Globally, online education and sharing has become a very useful tool for lifelong learning<sup>12,13</sup>. The COVID pandemic forced us all into the virtual learning environment, demonstrating the importance of virtual education and communication.

### Scholarships

We received only three scholarship applications in 2022, all were Congress scholarships; over the past 3 years we have not received any ETNEP/REP scholarship application forms. This was most likely due to the COVID-19 crisis; we hope with this crisis behind us, members will consider reapplying. We take this opportunity to remind all our members that the WCET® provides scholarships and especially Congress Travel Scholarships (CTS). Members just need to fulfil the requirements, complete the form and send it to the WCET® Norma N. Gill Foundation® (NNGF®) Committee Chair for assessment. The applicants will then receive a decision. The 2024 WCET® CTS application has been open since October 2023 and will close on the last day of February 2024. All forms and requirements can be found under: <https://wctn.org/page/NNGFScholarship>. Please ensure your application is completed and sent with the requested documentation, as only completed forms will be reviewed.

### Website and social media

In 2020 we moved from Memberclick to Your Membership platform. This move was made mainly to solve Paypal payment issues in Great British pounds. In exporting data from the old to the new platform, data was corrupted, which was an unexpected obstacle. A lot of time and energy was spent in order to improve this issue, but this is a work in progress and will be ongoing. We understand that some members are struggling to access the website and/or to proceed to online payments; please do not hesitate to contact our Central Office at [admin@wctn.org](mailto:admin@wctn.org) for help. Our deep appreciation goes to Susan Barber and Melissa Striharsky for their ongoing support.

Please remember that the Publications & Communications Committee was dissolved in 2020; if you would like to request any postings to the website, please contact our Central Office directly, and Denise Hibbert, President Elect, for publication in the *bulletin*; you can also raise issues through your ID.

### ID involvement

We applaud the increase of involvement of IDs over the years as they play a major role as liaison between you (WCET® members) and the WCET® (EB), but we still have work to do. Some countries are missing an ID and some do not have any contact with their nominated ID. The WCET® does not interfere in the way countries run elections or the processes on how a new ID is elected. Please let us know when there is a change so we can update the list posted on the website and print it in the *WCET® Journal* and *bulletin*. IDs, please contact Denise Hibbert, President Elect, with any questions about your country ID.

## NEXT STEPS

We have already discussed the results and your comments at our face-to-face EB, and again at our strategy planning meeting. The EB were joined by incoming non-voting EB members; new insight, through new eyes, was helpful. The meeting has given us the opportunity to work on ideas and implement action items for the new WCET® strategic plan.

## CONCLUSION

Membership surveys are an opportunity to give you, our WCET® members, a voice, while taking action to implement your suggestions and problem solve your remarks, as best we can. It is important to base EB decisions on research and membership surveys, rather than on assumptions or just what the EB thinks<sup>14</sup>. The survey is a valuable tool used to assess our action plan and strategy for the future. Being able to keep the same questions from one survey edition to another has been very helpful when analysing the results of the 2023 membership survey and while comparing results.

The WCET® is a unique organisation and we, as are you, are part of the team. Our success is your success and your success is ours. Many thanks for your support and your involvement. Please consider becoming more involved by joining a committee or a panel. The next membership survey is planned to be held in 2026 or 2027, so stay tuned and we hope you will be more inclined to participate to let your voice be heard.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to all who have completed this survey. You have given us a lot to think about and reflect on. We have especially appreciated all your fundraising ideas; the NNGF® Committee will investigate these to see if, and how, we can implement them.

It was also really encouraging to see that most of the 72 proposed improvement points have already been completed; we will work on making sure you are aware of all updates and achievements. Many thanks again for the new ideas for improvement that you have pointed out at this time. Be assured that we will do our very best to take them into consideration in our new strategic plan.

It would be remiss of us, as we move into a new EB era, not to mention the three awards that the WCET® has received: in 2020 as Journal of Wound Care (JWC) World Union Wound Healing Societies (WUWHS) Most Progressive Society; in 2021, Power of A, Silver Award for our Twinning Programs; and in 2022 JWC WUWHS Silver Award in the Innovation in Skin Integrity category, for the WCET® 2020 International Ostomy Guideline<sup>11</sup>. Your contribution to our success is not underestimated – without your ideas and support they would not be possible.

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# WCET® Journal



On behalf of the Editorial Board, Editor Jenny Prentice sincerely thanks all reviewers who completed reviews of the manuscripts that were submitted in 2023.

Thank you to Margaret Edmondson, Wen-Pei Huang, Janet Kuhnke, Sarah Lebovits, Rona Levin and Jenny Prentice.

Special thanks to those who reviewed multiple manuscripts. The voluntary contribution that each reviewer makes contributes greatly to the high standards that the World Council of Enterostomal Therapists Journal strives to achieve.

Thanks also to Emily Haesler for presenting and coordinating the WHAM Evidence Summaries for low- and middle-income countries throughout the year.