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Evaluation of Epidemiological Research Training Course VII-1

1. Characteristics of participants

Participants were recruited through internet channels. There were 86 registrants, and 70 completed the course successfully.

2. Course evaluation survey

Forty-six participants answered the end-course evaluation survey. Median duration of working in medicine was 3 years (ranged from 0 to 20). Seventy-one percent of participants were first time attendants. Most agreed that the course was useful and at an adequate level, and were interested in attending a future course. In-class exercises earned the highest evaluation. Of note, course materials were distributed electronically this time. As for the EBM Open Seminar, 71% answered that it was interesting.

		N (%) (Total N=46)					
		1	2	3	4	5	
Usefulness of the course	Poor	-	1 (2)	10 (22)	<u>20 (43)</u>	15 (33)	Superior
Overall level	Easy	-	3 (7)	<u>26 (57)</u>	12 (26)	5 (11)	Difficult
Selection of topics	Poor	-	2 (4)	15 (33)	<u>19 (41)</u>	10 (22)	Superior
Usefulness of exercises	Poor	-	1 (2)	9 (20)	<u>18 (39)</u>	<u>18 (39)</u>	Superior
Usefulness of materials	Poor	-	4 (9)	6 (13)	<u>22 (48)</u>	14 (30)	Superior
Course duration	Too short	1 (2)	6 (13)	<u>30 (65)</u>	7 (15)	2 (4)	Too long
Interest in future course	Not at all	-	2 (4)	7 (15)	14 (30)	<u>23 (50)</u>	Very much

Note: Most frequent answers are underlined.

		N (%) (Total N=46)					
		1	2	3	4	5	
Interest in the EBM Open Seminar	Poor	-	1 (2)	12 (27)	18 (40)	<u>14 (31)</u>	Superior

Thirty-one participants answered what they learned most in a given free space. The most frequent answer was "Study design and designing", followed by "Bias, confounding and error". Under the "Study design and designing" category, one participant wrote; *"How to start an epidemiological research with research questions and its benefits and contribution to community".*

Categories	N
Study designs and designing	18
Bias, confounding and error	10
Epidemiology and biostatistics in general	6
Data analysis	4
Literature searching	3
English	2
Others	5

3. Self-evaluation of achievements

Along with the course evaluation, 46 participants responded to the self-evaluation. Around 80% answered that their knowledge in epidemiology increased, but a much lower proportion (54%) gained confidence to design a study. As for knowledge in biostatistics and data analysis skills, which will be taught in the subsequent course, participants' self-evaluations were relatively lower as expected.

	N (%) (Total N=46)				
	1. Strongly disagree	2. Disagree	3. Neutral	4. Agree	5. Strongly agree
"My knowledge in Epidemiology increased"	-	2 (4)	7 (16)	<u>29 (64)</u>	7 (16)
"My knowledge in Biostatistics increased"	-	3 (7)	15 (33)	<u>19 (42)</u>	8 (18)
"I gained confidence in understanding scientific evidence / articles."	-	4 (9)	13 (29)	<u>23 (51)</u>	5 (11)
"I gained confidence in my skills to design a study."	1 (2)	3 (7)	17 (38)	<u>21 (47)</u>	3 (7)
"I gained confidence in analyzing data."	1 (2)	6 (13)	<u>19 (42)</u>	17 (38)	2 (4)
"I gained confidence in conducting epidemiological research."	1 (2)	6 (13)	17 (38)	<u>18 (40)</u>	3 (7)

Note: Most frequent answers are underlined.

Twenty-eight participants wrote their ideas for the next course. Frequent requests were "More exercises and discussion" followed by "Longer duration" and "Data analysis and biostatistics". As for the timing (the fourth frequent opinion), this course coincided with other research methodology and medical conferences.

Categories	N
More exercise and discussions	9
Longer duration	5
Data analysis and biostatistics	5
Timing of the course	4
Selection to new topics to introduce	3
Course structuring	2
Critical appraisal	2
Others	6

4. Summary

On the management side, we tried recruitment through internet channels, and participants were younger than previous courses. Other trials were electronic distribution of course materials and some lectures without Vietnamese translation. Despite the changes, participants' course evaluation remained high. As for self-evaluation of achievements, the proportion of those gaining confidence in study designing was lower than previous courses, perhaps reflecting less research and clinical experiences of this younger group. The next course will focus on biostatistics and data analysis, with more hands-on exercises. We will keep improving our teaching methods in order to respond to a diversity in levels of participants.