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Evaluation of the online ‘Continuing Professional Development for allied health professionals’ program

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CPD for AHPs

- Access to CPD can be limited for AHPs who work in rural and remote areas.
- Barriers to access: Distance/travel, cost, disruption to normal workload

Some comments:

"I guess the distances that people have to travel to get face-to-face training is always an issue for us"

"It is more expensive because I have to pay for travel and accommodation"

"Allied health professionals have to be exceptionally careful because they get so busy and get so potentially worn out by the normal workload, then they turn around and say they don’t have the time or energy to do this [CPD]"

E-learning in allied health

- E-learning: the delivery of instruction and continuing education via the internet
- E-learning is growing in popularity as a method for delivering continuing education to AHPs

Several benefits:
- Can be accessed without travel
- Can be accessed anytime
- Can be accessed anywhere with computer/internet access
- Can be completed at AHP’s own pace
- Online workshops/presentations can be viewed repeatedly

CPDWorks

(Previously SAHWEP, the State-wide Allied Health Workforce Education Program)

- CPDWorks is a free program offered to AHPs in Australia

Program aim: To support the continuing professional development needs of Australia’s rural allied health workforce.

Delivery methods:
- Via videoconferencing
- Via the internet
- Via CD-ROM
- Face-to-face

Study aim

To identify the advantages and disadvantages of the online/Internet component of CPDWorks Program
**Methods - Participants**

- Australian AHPs registered as members of the online CPD Program
- AHPs who don’t access the online CPD Program members of Services for Australian Rural and Remote Allied Health (SARRAH)

**Methods - Instrument**

- 4 semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted to assist with developing the questionnaire
- Online survey questionnaire
  - 38 questions: multiple choice and short answer
  - Questions relate to: demographics, access to CPD, CPD needs, participation in CPD
- Data collection still in progress

**Preliminary results**

**Demographics**

- N = 101
- 95% female, 5% male
- Main professions: OT, Physio, Podiatry and social work
- 53% worked in rural area, 7% worked in remote area, 40% worked in metro or larger regional centre
- 94% are currently working in allied health
- 80% were involved in clinical work, 24% in management, 15% in teaching

**Professionals who access the CPD site**

- n = 54
- 72% heard about the program through their workplace
- 9% use the website to gain CPD accreditation points with their professional association/peak body
- 68% think the website discussion board is useful for networking and increasing professional connectedness
- 61% reported that the online program has not enhanced their capacity to remain working rurally/remotely

**Professionals who don’t access the CPD site**

- n = 47
- Reasons for not accessing the site:
  - Program not available on my workplace (1)
  - Don’t have enough time to participate in CPD activities (9)
  - Too many other issues (7)
  - Limited time (3)
  - Other (5)
  - Program not of interest to me (3)
  - Program not well advertised (2)
Professionals who don’t access the CPD site cont’d

- 97% of respondents think online CPD would be beneficial for their knowledge and skill development
- 63% accessed online CPD through other sites
- 95% would consider accessing the site in the future

Implications of the research

- Inform key stakeholders of the impact of this online CPD program
- Assist with the improvement of the delivery and content of the program
- Promote this program to AHPs, their associations and State Governments who are not yet accessing the CPD program

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References


Thank you