Evidence Based Practice Online

By Jo Dorsch

UIC has been a leader in evidence based medicine (EBM) education since the mid-1980s when the discipline was known as “Critical Appraisal” to the present when it is more widely known as evidence based practice (EBP). Library of the Health Sciences and College of Medicine collaboration has been a hallmark of the success of UIC EBM initiatives. These initiatives include classes within health professions curricula, a long-lived Web page which is now the EBM Research Guide, degree-based courses, and continuing education offerings for librarians and health professionals.

A three-day continuing education workshop course, taught collaboratively by Library and College of Medicine faculty for a number of years, is now delivered on Blackboard as a six-week online course called **Evidence Based Practice Online**. The “transformation” of the course was the work of the EBP Team consisting of Peg Burnette (LHS-Peoria), Sandy DeGroote (Daley), Jo Dorsch (LHS-Peoria), Dr. Jordan Hupert (Pediatrics), Cleo Pappas (LHS-Chicago), Ryan Rafferty (LHS-Urbana), Carol Scherrer (LHS-Chicago), and Dr. Alan Schwartz (Medical Education). Critical to the success of this effort was funding provided by the Greater Midwest Region National Network/Libraries of Medicine (NO1-LM-6-3503).

**EBP Online** is an asynchronous online course designed to introduce health and information professionals to the principles of Evidence Based Practice and covers the steps of the EBP process: formulating a clinical question, searching the literature, examining levels of evidence, and critically appraising and evaluating the evidence. The course also reviews fundamental epidemiological concepts essential to understanding the clinical literature as well as tools to facilitate the EBP process. Recorded lectures, tutorials, independent readings, assignments, and threaded discussions provide an opportunity for assimilation, interaction, and exchange of ideas. A capstone assignment integrates all of the concepts presented during the course.

A pilot was conducted in spring 2011 with a group of 20 librarians from the Health Science Librarians of Illinois. This group provided valuable feedback that was used to improve and enhance the course before it went public. The course was offered for the first time in the fall of 2011 with an enrollment of 20 librarians from throughout the Midwest. Feedback tells us that this online format is an effective way to provide
continuing education to busy professionals – it’s convenient, requires no travel, and is inexpensive. Online learning doesn’t suit everyone’s style, and some students commented that the format did not provide enough interaction. Other students felt the ability to work through the course material at their own pace with the opportunity to reinforce learning made up for the lack of personal contact. Although librarians have been the primary target audience, the EBP Team plans to expand enrollment to health professionals in the future.

The LHS contributions to furthering continuing education in EBP were recognized with the Health Sciences Librarians of Illinois President’s Award, presented to Jo Dorsch at the association’s annual meeting at Starved Rock in October 2011.

To learn more about this course, please contact Jo Dorsch, EBP Team Coordinator, at jod@uic.edu. You will find links to selected EBP Online course resource materials on the EBM Research Guide at http://researchguides.uic.edu/ebm.

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