

Training Teachers to teach Evidence-based Practice

One of the aims of the Oculus project was to introduce or enhance the teaching of evidence-based practice (EBP) within each of the optometry curricula. Research on teaching EBP (summarised in the [EBP teaching manual](#)) indicates that it can be taught effectively in a clinical context and using a range of teaching approaches and contexts. It was therefore important for us to ensure that teachers of clinical and non-clinical subjects were familiar with the concept of EBP and were able to teach it well. To this end, we designed teacher training sessions for each of the partner institutions in India and Israel. As a basis for these, we used prior experience within the group of running similar training in optometry (Suttle et al, 2015), as well as published reports on EBP teacher training in other health disciplines (Koffel and Reidt, 2015).

We developed a two-day programme of tutorials, workshops and discussions with the aim of teaching teachers about the history and concept of EBP and the processes involved in practicing EBP including formulating a clinical question, finding relevant evidence, appraising it to determine the best evidence, and applying it in a clinical setting. For this purpose, tasks were set including the use of hypothetical clinical scenarios on which to frame questions, finding evidence via research databases, and appraising using critical appraisal tools (CATs) to find the best evidence, in addition to applying the evidence in patient-centred clinical management. In addition, some sessions focused on teaching EBP, and on the most effective EBP teaching methods as determined by an overview of systematic reviews conducted within the team prior to the training.

The teacher training programme was delivered in a similar way at all five partner institutions. At CU and MAHE teachers from not only optometry but also other health disciplines within the university (e.g. pharmacy and ophthalmology) were invited to attend. This extended the benefits of training beyond optometry faculty and increased the richness and diversity of discussions during the workshops and activities.

As a result of the broad attendance at CU and MAHE, our training programme evaluation was able to capture sufficient data there to determine whether EBP knowledge, skills and attitude had been improved by the day one training sessions. The data indicated that participants were more likely to view research as important as part of clinical decision making and felt more capable of using research for this purpose, but that they were not more likely to look for research to answer clinical questions. These findings suggest that their skills and knowledge about EBP and the use of research were increased after the training, but that unfortunately they would not be more likely to use these capabilities after training. The findings will be used to inform ongoing EBP teacher training at the participating institutions in future and were disseminated at the European Academy of Optometry and Optics meeting in 2019.

Koffel J and Reidt S (2015) An interprofessional train-the-trainer evidence-based-practice workshop: Design and evaluation. *J Interprof Care* 29(4): 367-369.

Suttle CM, Challinor KL, Thompson RE, Pesudovs K, Togher L, Chiavaroli N, Lee A, Junghans B, Stapleton F, Watt K, Jalbert I. (2015) Attitudes and barriers to evidence-based practice in optometry educators. *Optom Vis Sci.* 92(4):514-23.

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