

Making evidence-based decisions in reproductive health: a training course

Course overview

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Introduction

This training Initiative has jointly been developed by the Regional Office of the World Health Organization in Africa (WHO/AFRO), the South African Cochrane Centre and WHO Department of Reproductive Health and Research in Geneva (WHO/RHR). It is aimed at building the capacity of health workers and policy-makers in the utilization of evidence-based reproductive health practices. The use of current best available evidence from relevant, valid research about the effects of different forms of health care in making decisions about the management and care of individual patients or the delivery of health services is crucial in settings where resources are limited.

A Regional Consultation was held with experts in reproductive health from six countries in the African region (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Uganda and Zambia), the staff of the South African Cochrane Centre and WHO in Cape Town in February 2001. Subsequently, WHO commissioned the South African Cochrane Centre (SACC) to produce a Training Package in consultation with experts and the WHO Secretariat.

Since 2003 several workshops have been held in Africa and Asia. The course contents have been revised and updated in response to the feedback received.

1. Who is the training course for?

This training tool has specifically been developed to build the capacity of training facilitators, health workers and policy-makers in the utilization of evidence-based reproductive health practices.

To date audiences that have received the course have mainly been clinicians (doctors, midwives), managers in reproductive health, medical administrators and teachers.

2. Course objectives

Goal

The goal of the training course is to contribute to the creation of a significant mass of health workers familiar in critically evaluating research, making evidence-based choices in their practices and thereby improve patient care.

Objectives

Participants will develop an understanding of the term “evidence-based health care” (EBHC) and its implications for decision-making.

At the end of the workshop participants should be able to:

- formulate clinical answerable questions. Well-built clinical questions should have 3 components; Intervention, health problem, people (patients)
- search effectively for evidence using tools such as the Reproductive Health Library and the Cochrane Library
- critically appraise clinical evidence for its validity and applicability
- understand basic effect measures such as Relative Risk and Numbers Needed to Treat

3. Course structure and contents

It is generally easier (both financially and logistically) to organize national or subnational workshops than regional intercountry ones. The course facilitators can contact the WHO Headquarters Secretariat (cuzina@who.int) for advice regarding facilitators, course materials and preparatory activities.

The course is arranged in a modular form with PowerPoint slides and other resource materials.

The full training content is available on a CD ROM to make use, print and updates of the course material more convenient and cost-effective. The content is flexible and will regularly be revised, strengthened and kept up-to-date in the light of evaluations from the workshops.

The full course is a three and a half day introduction to evidence-based health care with the aim to provide participants with an understanding of the term "evidence-based health care" and address challenges in translating research evidence to practice.




It is an interactive course in the form of presentations, case studies, group work arranged in flexible and adaptable "modules" (see outline below). Those who are familiar with the programme can use the modules independently for other training activities.

A pre/post workshop knowledge evaluation takes place in the beginning and after the course. And at the end of each day there is a short summary (reflections) about key points of the day.

Each workshop is evaluated for its contents in terms of resource documents and presentations by the participants. These evaluations will be analysed for appraisal of the Initiative.

The following folders and documents will display on the screen when the CD ROM is opened on the computer:



-  **(File) Course overview:** the document provides a general outline of the course and available resources contained in the CD ROM.
-  **(File) The Facilitator manual:** is designed in "modules" to assist the facilitators in organizing, implementing and monitoring the course on EHBC in reproductive health.
-  **(Folder) Training modules:** includes 13 modules containing PowerPoint slides and a 14th folder containing some other relevant files. Facilitators are encouraged to modify these "modules" (see below) for their local context.

Participants will use the relevant documents depending on the sessions.

Programme

<i>Day 1</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Time</i>
Module 1	Welcome and introduction (2 parts)	Morning
Module 2	Formulating and solving a clinical question	Morning
Module 3	Study designs and bias	Afternoon
Module 4	Searching for evidence: Cochrane Library and RHL	Afternoon
<i>Day 2</i>		
Module 5	Measures of effect	Morning
Module 6	RHL practical	Morning
Module 7	Evaluating research reports	Afternoon
<i>Day 3</i>		
Module 8	Health care challenges	Morning
Module 9	Example of an implementation strategy	Morning
Module 10	Case study: prophylactic corticosteroids for preterm birth	Morning

Module 11	Myths and episiotomies	Afternoon
Module 12	Board game	Afternoon
<i>Day 4</i>		
Module 13	Revisions and implementing EBHC	Morning

Characteristics of facilitators

It is often not easy to facilitate a workshop after attending one. Individuals need to have experience in the field, exposure to the course beforehand and aware of some techniques in facilitating courses. For the purposes of this course facilitators should ideally have the following attributes:

1. Working in the reproductive health field (clinically or policy formulating level)
2. Good communication skills
3. Good deal of experience in training/lecturing
4. Good understanding of English
5. Willing to work in a team
6. Basic computer understanding
7. Willing to disseminate the acquired skills and knowledge to a wider professional and academic audience
8. Organized and can plan ahead!

Practical sessions

- Introduction and practical exercise to the WHO Reproductive Health Library and search process on selected systematic reviews.
- An educative board game played with a die and token with questions to answer on cards.
- Role plays
- Case studies

Monitoring and Evaluation

The knowledge questionnaires are included to measure the knowledge of evidence based health care among reproductive health workers and the knowledge change before and after the training among trainees.

Pre-workshop

questionnaire to assess current knowledge, attitudes and practice of EBHC.

During workshop

questionnaire about content, learning, standard of trainers, enjoyment.

Post-workshop

questionnaire about participant's changes in practice and understanding of EBHC since attending the workshop.

Past training activities undertaken by WHO

2002: Cape Town, South Africa

2003: Hat Yai, Thailand

2004: Kisumu, Kenya, Abuja, Nigeria and Lusaka, Zambia

2005: Suva, Fiji, East London, South Africa

2006: Mombasa, Kenya

WHO's role in the initiative

- Support the development and updating of the training package
- Monitoring and evaluation of the initiative
- Establishment of support structures for the initiative at country level. It is anticipated that the local training programmes would gradually be supported through local agencies or resources. However, WHO would ensure that the initiative continues by providing seed funding and technical assistance where and when necessary.
- Supporting intercountry networking

4. Expected outcomes of the initiative

- Awareness raised about the benefits of using evidence-based decision making processes to improve reproductive health practices.
- Reproductive health workers versed in the principles and practice of evidence-based health care.
- Health workers equipped with the knowledge and tools to improve reproductive health care practices relevant to their settings and to understand, use, disseminate, promote, adapt, adopt evidence-based guidelines
- Support mechanisms established for expanding evidence-based decision-making in the region.
- Working together to promote implementation of effective interventions and identifying gaps in knowledge.

