International Faculty Development in Family Medicine through Videoconferencing

Jeffrey F. Markuns, MD, EdM, Elizabeth G. Henry, MHS, Alain J. Montegut, MD

BACKGROUND

- Developing Family Medicine as a specialty is a key component of building improved primary care in many developing countries
- Family Medicine is a new specialty in Vietnam
- A core group of academic physicians in Family Medicine are necessary to develop curriculum and train Family Medicine physicians

OVERALL GOALS

- To create an introductory faculty development program in Family Medicine, funded by the Vietnam Education Foundation Faculty Scholar Program
- To use videoconferencing (VC) to provide a method for facilitating international faculty development
- Participants in the course should be able to understand the principles and practice of FM in academic settings and prepare curricular content for FM postgraduate educational programs in Vietnam
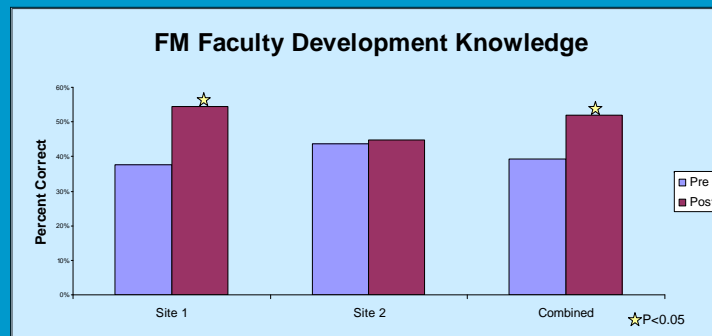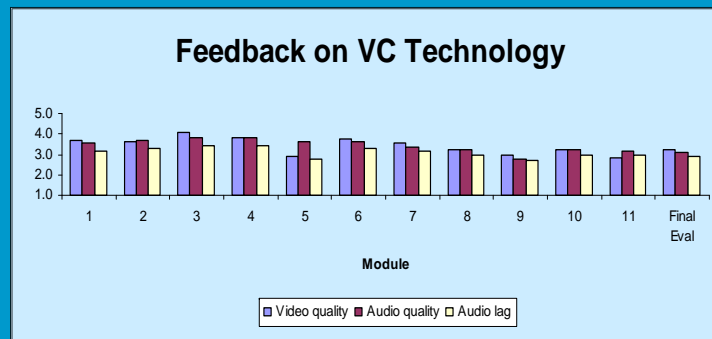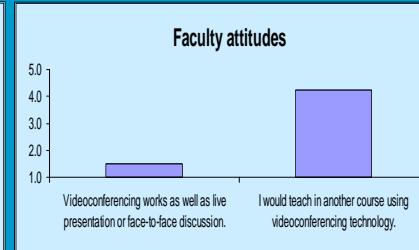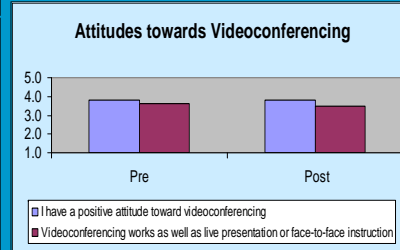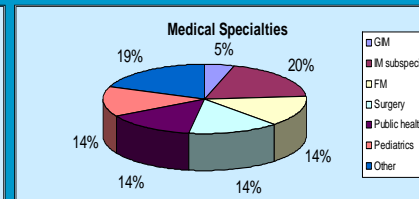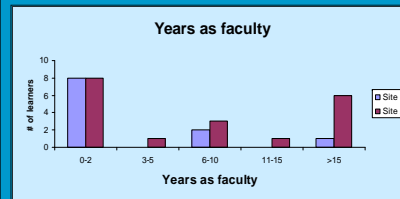
PROGRAM COMPONENTS

- Didactic lectures
  - Face-to-face and videoconferencing
- Small group discussions
  - Led by on-site teaching associates
  - Facilitated either face-to-face or through VC
- Curriculum development project
  - Preparing curriculum using goal analysis, objectives, teaching and evaluation methods

METHODS

- Learners at two sites (Hue, HCM City) in Vietnam
- Taught by U.S. faculty in collaboration with local Vietnamese teaching associates
- 11 modules
  - 4 modules and final presentations face-to-face
  - All others VC from U.S. to both sites in Vietnam

RESULTS

Years as faculty

Medical Specialties
- GIM 20%
- IM subspecialty 5%
- FM 14%
- Surgery 14%
- Public health 14%
- Pediatrics 14%
- Other 19%

Attitudes towards Videoconferencing
- I have a positive attitude toward videoconferencing
- Videoconferencing works as well as live presentation or face-to-face instruction

Faculty attitudes
- Videoconferencing works as well as live presentation or face-to-face discussion.
- I would teach in another course using videoconferencing technology.

Feedback on VC Technology
- Video quality
- Audio quality
- Audio lag

Module: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 Final Eval

FM Faculty Development Knowledge
- Pre
- Post
- Site 1, Site 2, Combined
- ☆ P<0.05

SUCCESSES

- Delivered all 11 modules to both sites
- Excellent participation at site 1 throughout entire course
- Despite challenges, videoconferencing still rated positively by students
- Cost-effective alternative to on-site delivery of teaching material for future projects
- Project presentations contained substantial elements from course

CHALLENGES

- Used IP (rather than ISDN) to cut costs
- Video quality deteriorates significantly when connected to two sites (versus one)
- Audio lag or lack of connection at times
- Competing with other internet needs of institutions
- Site 2 with higher quality technology than Site 1
- High dropout rate from Site 2
- Time difference (12 hours) for scheduling

CONCLUSIONS

- Learners have positive feelings towards videoconferencing
- Teaching faculty are less positive, but see potential for the technology
- Videoconferencing may be a successful method for international faculty development
- Advanced technology is required to support multi-site videoconferencing

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider curriculum redesign for future international faculty development through videoconferencing
- Experiment with ISDN versus IP for similar courses in the future
- Consider institutional IT upgrades

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