

Study of allied health EBP capacity – a re-assessment of self-efficacy, outcome-expectancy in, and use of EBP.

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Background:

Evidence-based practice (EBP) is fundamental to improving patient outcomes. Factors affecting EBP capabilities are linked with institutional culture and barriers, personal self-belief and individual ability. To effect change in capabilities interventions must target barriers and be informed by behaviour change theory. This study measured the effect of training and organisational change on EBP measures amongst allied health professionals.

Method:

All allied health staff (n=196) employed across the Mater Health Services (Brisbane, Queensland) were invited to complete a survey assessing EBP self-efficacy, outcome expectancy and use, as well as EBP training undertaken. Data were compared with surveys from 2010 and 2011.

Results:

Response rate was 70.9% (n = 139) allied health staff; 32 staff completed all surveys. Significant improvements were observed over time in staff undertaking training (in EBP, $p = 0.008$; in research design and analysis, $p = 0.003$) since the first survey. The significant increase in EBP self-efficacy that occurred from T1 to T2 remained at T3 ($p = 0.008$). Fewer between-department differences were observed in the EBP constructs over time.

Discussion:

This study identified sustained EBP self-efficacy improvements in this cohort and between-department differences have virtually disappeared. Ongoing interventions are required to sustain and improve staff's belief in their ability to deliver EBP. Specifically, this will take the form of 3 workshops; an 'Ideas workshop' to assist staff formulate an answerable clinical question; a 'Literature searching and critical appraisal' workshop to assist staff track down the best evidence and undertake a rapid critical appraisal of controlled trials and other literature, and an 'Evaluation of the effectiveness and efficiency of your care' workshop, partnering with the hospital's service improvement coaches to assist in integrating and embedding these elements of clinical care into usual practice.