

Health Care Provider Continuing Education in Asthma Care Project: Program Development and Evaluation

M.D. Lougheed, D. Moosa, S. Finlayson, W. Hopman, M. Quinn, K. Szpiro, J. Reisman

Ontario Lung Association, Toronto, Ontario

ABSTRACT

Purpose: The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's Asthma Plan of Action funded the Ontario Lung Association to develop and implement a continuing medical education (CME) program to promote the implementation of the Canadian Asthma Consensus Guidelines in primary care.

Program Design: The program combines expert content, process and facilitation in a 3-hour workshop format. Separate didactic sessions by adult and pediatric asthma specialists using standardized slide presentations are followed by interactive small group case discussions led by trained primary care facilitators. Approximately 200 workshops were delivered over 3 years to target communities. Program evaluation includes a workshop evaluation, a baseline needs assessment (physicians only) and a 3-month post-reflective evaluation.

Results: 2783 primary care providers (1313 physicians, 1470 allied health) attended workshops between September 2002 and March 2005. 2133 participants (1007 or 76.7% of physicians and 1126 or 76.6% of allied health) submitted workshop evaluations. They rated the adult and pediatric presentations as relevant to family medicine (4.46 ± .75 and 4.66 ± .59 respectively. Mean ± SD; 1=strongly disagree and 5=strongly agree) and found the case discussions valuable (4.45 ± .77; 4.54 ± .68 respectively). 1409 (66.1%) anticipate making a change in practice. Physicians much more likely to implement medication changes (p<0.001), 98.4% of respondents indicated they would recommend this workshop to a colleague.

Conclusion: Primary care providers rate this novel provincial asthma CME program highly. Although the provider groups differed in preferred learning format, the majority of both groups anticipate it will lead to changes in practice.

BACKGROUND

Asthma affects approximately 12% of children and 7% of adults in Canada. In response to rising concerns regarding asthma morbidity, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care implemented a provincial "Asthma Plan of Action" (APA) in January, 2002. The goal of the APA is to reduce mortality, morbidity and costs associated with asthma by focusing on 3 areas: prevention and health promotion, management, and research including surveillance. The current project is one of 14 projects funded by the APA.

PURPOSE

To develop, implement and evaluate a continuing medical education (CME) program for physicians and allied health care professionals to promote the implementation of the Canadian Asthma Consensus Guidelines (CAG) in primary care in Ontario.

METHOD

- Literature review of guidelines dissemination
- Steering committee (pediatric and adult respirologists, family physician, Ontario Lung Association Asthma Program Manager, certified asthma educators) designed educational intervention:

- 3-hour evening workshop format
 - 1 1/2 hours each on adult and pediatric asthma
 - 1/2 hour didactic session by specialist
 - 1 hour interactive case discussions led by trained primary care facilitator
- Standardized slide kit for specialist presenters
- Facilitator guide (manual)
- Registrants eligible to receive MainPro 'C' CME credits by College of Family Physicians of Ontario
 - baseline needs assessment
 - workshop evaluation and 3 month post-reflective evaluation
- Specialist presenters and facilitators recruited largely from OTS membership; Primary care practitioners experienced in group facilitation sought locally
- Deliver 137 workshops to target communities in Ontario over 3 years

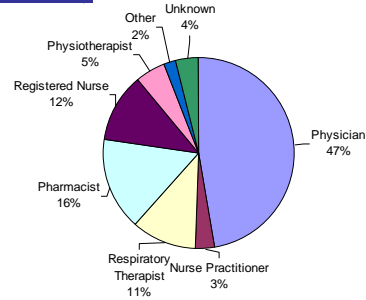
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

Data were summarized as frequency responses and Mean ± SD. Differences between groups were determined by unpaired *t*-tests and Chi-squared analyses.

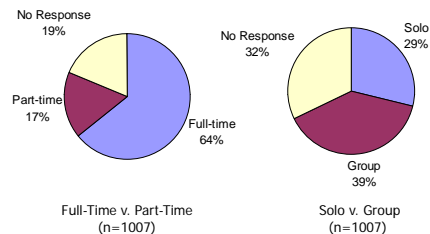
RESULTS

A total of 2783 health care providers (1313 physicians, 1470 allied health) attended 137 workshops between September 2002 and March 2005. Of these, 2133 (76.6%), including 1007 (76.7%) physicians and 1126 (76.6%) allied health, submitted workshop evaluations.

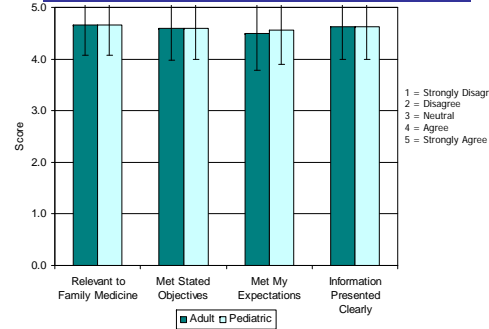
Characteristics of Participants (n=2133)



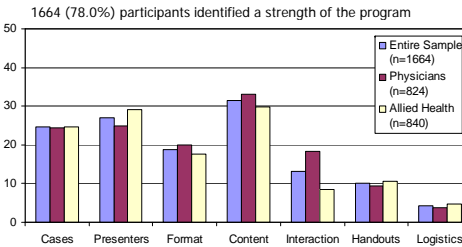
Practice Characteristics of Physicians



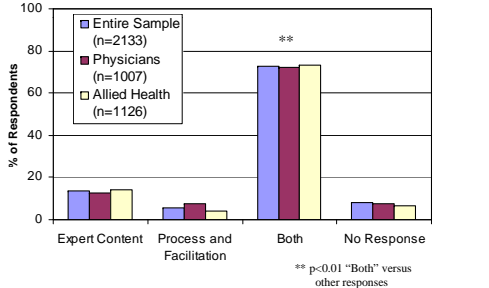
Evaluation of Didactic Presentations



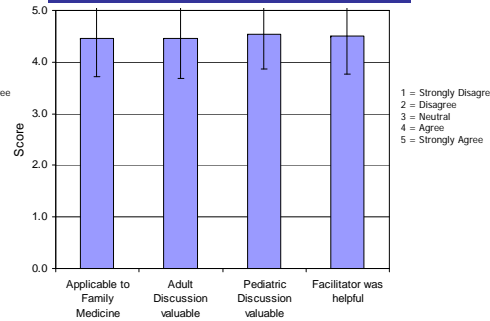
Strengths of Program



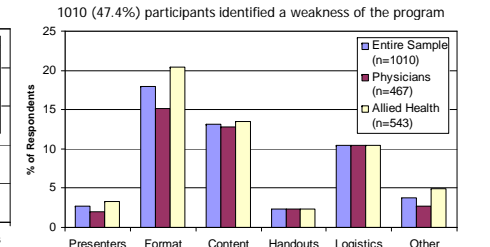
Preferred Educational Format



Evaluation of Case Discussions



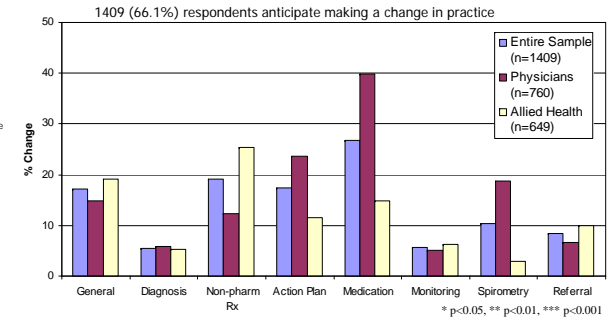
Weaknesses of Program



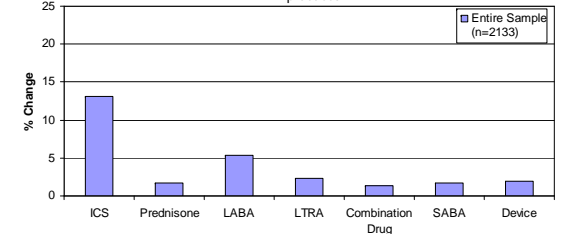
Preferred Learning Format

Discussion	Separate (%)	Lecture		No Response (%)
		Separate (%)	Combined (%)	
Physicians (n=424)	20.3	3.6	42.5	3.1
Allied Health (n=578)	10.2	58.2	3.3	0.5
Combined (n=1002)	3.5	1.9	42.5	9.2
No Response (%)	1.2	1	4.2	

Anticipated Changes in Practice



570 (26.7%) respondents anticipate making a change in medication prescribing practices



Recommend Workshop to a Colleague

98.4% of both groups indicated they would recommend this workshop to a colleague.

CONCLUSIONS

- Primary Care Providers rate this provincial asthma CME program highly.
- Although physicians and allied health care providers differ in preferred learning format, the majority of both groups anticipate it will lead to changes in practice.

IMPLICATIONS

This program may lead to improvements in primary health care provider asthma practice patterns and improved patient outcomes.

Funding provided by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Government of Ontario.