Developing and implementing educational innovations to improve medicines use in sub-Saharan Africa

1Bradley H, 1Ncube N, 2Coetzee R, 1,3Daames P, 1Birkett J, 1Alexander L, 1Mwanda Z, 1Laing R
1School of Public Health, University of the Western Cape (UWC), Cape Town, South Africa; 2School of Pharmacy, UWC, Cape Town, South Africa; 3Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS), South Africa; 4Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH), Boston, USA

Background

Irrational medicines use is a problem in sub-Saharan Africa with adverse health and financial impacts for individuals and governments. Antimicrobial resistance and the increasing burden of non-communicable diseases highlight the need for health professionals with skills to investigate and improve medicines uses.

Training options offered at the University of the Western Cape (UWC):

- Face-to-face one week Rational Medicines Use Short Course
- Masters-level Online Rational Medicines Use Module - one semester
  - Elective Module for Master of Public Health
  - Continuing Education Module

In July 2014, 2015 and 2016, 56 participants from sub-Saharan African countries attended the Rational Medicines Use Short Courses and the first Online Module was delivered from July - November 2015.

Purpose

To describe the development and implementation of training for health care professionals, pharmacists, medical practitioners and nurses in Rational Medicines Use at UWC, South Africa. This poster will focus specifically on the Rational Medicines Use Online Module, the first Online Module developed in Pharmaceutical Public Health, a new area of specialisation at UWC.

Approach

1 Preliminary planning

- Determine purpose of innovation
- Identify target audience
- Assemble team with range of skills
- Access resources for development and implementation

2 Development

- Over two year period
- Identify learning outcomes & assessment criteria
- Create storyboard (sessions, outcomes, activities)
- Prepare content (synthesising existing resources) - written materials, videos, power points, readings
- Develop assessments
- Create e-learning site and upload module content

3 Implementation

- In 2015 twelve registered participants
  - 5 Master of Public Health students
  - 7 Continuing Education students
- Paced module comprising 11 weekly sessions
- Facilitated by session convenors
- Weekly interactions with session facilitators using range of e-tools for teaching and learning – Skype, discussion forums, chat room, file sharing
- Self and peer learning opportunities

4 Evaluation

Positives

- Module relevant to work situations
- iKamva (UWC e-learning platform) easy to navigate
- Liked use of different learning media
- Valued interactions with session convenors and peers

Challenges

- Meeting weekly deadlines
- Internet activity sometimes problematic
- Unable to print out session notes

Lessons learnt

Principles derived from the development and implementation of this module include the value of highly motivated and experienced developers, with range of professional backgrounds; importance of conceptual and logistic leadership; effective induction and support for e-learning site; regular paced contact between convenors and students; and opportunities provided by authentic activities for quality learning.