

Exploratory Study of Evidence-Based Practice in Dietetic Interns and Their Preceptors

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Objective: To address dietetic interns' (DI) knowledge of research methodology and understanding of statistics through introductory modules and identify how preceptors can address barriers to interns applying evidence-based practice (EBP).

Design: A mixed methods design combining implementation of an introductory course in one population and distribution of a survey in another.

Methods and Instruments: An online five-module introduction to EBP program was implemented for the 2019-2020 Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) DI (n=12) with pre/post-tests administered six weeks apart and in-module quizzes. A validated survey tool was administered to internship preceptors (n=43).

Results: When comparing pre/post-test data assessing DI baseline knowledge of EBP, the improvements in scores approached statistical significance but were not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$) with a weak positive correlation ($r=0.169$). Module 1, "PICO and Initial Searching" had the highest number of in-module quiz attempts (n=85) and page interactions (n=87), but the lowest median score (77.78%). Module 2, "Searching Databases", had the second highest page interaction (n=46), lowest number of attempts (n=12), and highest median score (90%). The preceptor survey showed 98% of preceptors strongly agree/agree EBP guidelines are important for RDNs, but 86% perceive lack of time as a major barrier/barrier to EBP.

Conclusions: Statistical significance was not achieved, however the sample size was small. Variability between number of in-module quiz attempts and median scores was high. Further research is needed to evaluate exposure to EBP in dietetic internships and translation into professional practice.

Conflict of Interest: None.

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