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The Evidence-Based Scholarly Communications Conference: Capitalizing on the unique role of information professionals in translational research

Philip J. Kroth
Holly E. Phillips
D. Eldredge

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OBJECTIVE
To determine if the Evidence-Based Scholarly Communication Conference (EBSCC) that was held March 11-12, 2010 in Albuquerque, NM, would have both immediate and long-term effects on participants' attitudes, skills training or advocacy actions.

SETTING
The EBSC Conference was held March 11-12, 2010 in Albuquerque, NM. The conference was targeted to information professionals from Clinical and Translational Science Award-minded institutions.

METHODS
We employed a Prospective Cohort Study which sought to compare participants' (population) attitudes towards the conference skills and advocacy training (exposure) and outcomes as measured by 1 preconference (N=33) and 2 post-conference surveys (outcome). The post-conference surveys were open 1 (N=23) and 7 (forthcoming) months after the conference.

We hypothesized that the conference would have both immediate and long-term effects on participant attitudes towards skills and sense of advocacy efficacy.

ATTENDEE (POPULATION) DEMOGRAPHICS
- 46 attendees from 25 unique institutions across 20 states (Figure 1)
- Most were from institutions with a funded CTSA (Chart 1)

RESULTS
The pre-conference survey asked attendees to rank key issues in advocating for open access publication. The highest ranked issues were: 1) strategies for promoting open access publishing, 2) improving PubMed support of translational research and collaboration, and 3) new roles for institutional repositories (Chart 2).

The conference covered these and other content areas. Attendees felt the skills and advocacy content that will be most helpful with local promotion efforts were (Chart 3):
- copyright management
- developing short advocacy speeches
- open access publication promotion strategies.

Participant confidence (attitude) to successfully promote open access publication at their institution increased by 18% post-conference (Chart 4). Over 1/3 of participant had already planned or taken steps based on knowledge acquired.

CONCLUSIONS
Post-conference, participants:
- were highly satisfied with acquired skills and content
- felt more confident in key skill areas, like advocacy
- had either planned or taken steps to use knowledge acquired for further open access activities.

NEXT STEPS
Attendees:
- 74% agreed that we need to advocate for a formal agenda with the NIH CTSC organization
- 52% felt an existing organization should take on this advocacy role (e.g., MLA, AAHSL)

Organizers:
- Conduct 7 month follow up survey and analyze results
- Publish more in-depth analysis
- Use conference content to teach MLA CE course
- Establish MLA Special Interest Group

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