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Evaluation of an evidence-based scholarly communication conference focused on support of translational investigators using a prospective longitudinal cohort design

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OBJECTIVE
To determine if 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, and advocacy actions in support of open access publication by translational investigators.

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

METHODS
We performed a prospective longitudinal cohort study to compare participants’ (population) attitudes towards the conference skills and advocacy training (exposure) with outcomes. The evaluation consisted of one pre-conference (N=33) and two post-conference web-based surveys (N=23 and N=11) completed anonymously 1 and 7 months post conference. The organizers sought no on-site conference evaluation.

ATTENDEE (POPULATION) DEMOGRAPHICS
- 46 attendees from 25 unique institutions across 20 states (Figure 1)
- Most were from institutions with a funded Clinical and Translational Sciences Award (CTSA) See 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).

One month post-conference, attendees perception of the issues importance changed with the highest ranked issues: 1) copyright management, 2) developing short advocacy speeches, and 3) open access publication promotion strategies.

Participant confidence (attitude) to successfully promote open access publication at their institution increased slightly (18%) at one month after the conference but this increase diminished at seven months.

CONCLUSIONS
1. Attendee’s ranking of importance of national issues related to the promotion of open access publication changed significantly after the conference favoring copyright management and development of a three minute advocacy message.
2. Attendee’s confidence to affect an increase in the use of open access publication although increased at one month post-conference, returned to pre-conference levels by seven months.
3. The proportion of attendees who indicated they had taken a next step to affect change decreased between one month and seven months post-conference.
4. Attendee’s enthusiasm for taking next steps waned at seven months but also favored recurring meetings of this type.
5. Conclusions 2-4 suggests that a recurring meeting could be helpful to maintain interest and activism in promoting open access publication by translational investigators.

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