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Introduction

❖ Continuing medical education can be achieved through Internet-based programs, covering physician's education needs in epidemiology. This paper describes a postgraduate epidemiology course by virtual education.

Objective

❖ To describe the percentage of completion of an Epidemiology web course and to analyze the profiles of students in order to predict graduation.

Methods

- ❖ Design: Cohort study.
- ❖ Students were followed for 32 weeks until the end of the virtual epidemiology course.
- ❖ The Web-based course used Open Source platform (Moodle) and consisted of 8 topic modules with on-line classes, discussion boards and diverse educational materials (audio-visual, pdf, text, etc).
- ❖ We describe the association between proportion of completion and gender, country of residence, access to internet at home, connection type (broad band or phone connection), mastery of English and profession / specialty.
- ❖ Comparisons between completers and non-completers were performed with chi2 test

Results

- ❖ 99 students were followed up to a maximum 32 weeks.
- ❖ Mean age was 39 years (range: 23-71), 63% were female.
- ❖ The course completion rate was 49.5% (95% CI 39,3-59,7). The mean age was similar in both groups (p 0.16).
- ❖ 51% of women and 47% of men completed the course (p 0.73).
- ❖ Only 4 people had no internet connection at home, 74.2% had broadband internet connection, and 42.9% finished the course compared with 58.8% of those with phone connection (p 0.25).
- ❖ 76% were physicians and 50% of these completed the course vs. 54% of the non-physicians (p 0.70). 24.3% had advanced level of English and 61% of these completed the course vs. 41% of those with lower English levels (p 0.13).
- ❖ 10% were foreigners (Cuba, Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, the USA, and the UK) and there were differences in the rate of completion according to country of residence 52% Argentine vs 20% foreigners (p 0.049).

Conclusion

❖ Percentage of completion is similar to that reported in other countries and there were no differences between the characteristics of the students, except for a greater completion rate in Argentine students.