

## LETTER to the EDITOR

## Assessment of Educational Needs for Retraining Physicians Working at Addiction Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers

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“Training needs assessment” is the systemic study of a problem or innovation, integrating data and ideas from varied sources, in order to make effective decisions or recommendations about what should happen next (1). Continuing medical education (CME) refers to a specific form of continuing education that helps those in the medical field maintain capability and learn about new and developing areas of their field. These activities may take place as live events, written publications, online programs, audio, video, or other electronic media. Content for these programs is developed, reviewed, and delivered by faculty who are experts in their individual clinical areas (2). Today, however, without a program of active learning, no doctor can hope to promote one's experience for more than a few years after graduation (3).

The aim of this study was to assess interest and needs of physicians that work at methadone maintenance treatment centers (MMT clinics) for retraining or CME and the factors associated with this interest. We have limited or out of reach national studies about needs assessment for CME especially for physician who work at MMT centers.

There are 409 MMT clinics in Mashhad. All physicians that work at these centers were considered as our participants. A checklist contained some demographic questions and a list of recommended topics (13 items) for retraining and CME in addiction treatment field, were used. The aim of the questionnaire was obtaining information on years of practice in medicine, years of practice in drug abuse treatment field, satisfaction rate of previous CME program,

effectiveness and applicability of courses and thirteen proposed courses title for ongoing CME in Likert-type scale (1, very little to 5, very much). Checklists were completed through telephone inquiries. Just 201 physicians were working on the project and gave full answers to questions.

Ethical issues have been completely observed by the researchers. The respondents were anonymous and participated willingly and voluntarily in this study. In addition, all of the responses were treated confidentially.

Statistical analysis was performed by SPSS 11.5 software, using analytical and descriptive statistical tests. Data were described with central indexes, distribution indexes and frequency.

The mean of the years of practice in medicine was  $10.5 \pm 4.6$  years (min1, max 31 yr). The mean of the years of practice working at MMT clinic was  $3.9 \pm 2.4$  years (min1, max 12 yr). Most physicians obtained their MMT certificate about 5 years ago ( $5.4 \pm 2.4$ ).

The ranking of preferred proposed course titles in participants have been shown in Table 1.

65% of respondents had participated in previous addiction CME programs and their comments about satisfaction and effectiveness of them have been illustrated in Table 2. We just found significant relation between years of “practice in drug abuse treatment field” and “CME satisfaction”; whereas there did not exist any other significant relation.

Participants suggested that CME program must change to non-repetitive, practical, comprehensive and effective courses.

Table 1. Rating of proposed courses title in need assessment list

Ranking	Proposed course titles	Likert score	Freidman average rating
1	Psychiatric problems in drug abuser	800	9.88
2	Sexual problems in drug abuser	771	9.34
3	Management and treatment of stimulant substances use	768	9.08
4	Sleeping problems in drug abuser	709	8.11
5	Principles of Counseling	641	7.2
6	Drug interaction and side effects	639	4.12
7	Craving management	637	6.98
8	Management and treatment of Tobacco usage	623	6.8
9	Harm reduction management	582	5.92
10	Gastrointestinal problems in drug abuser	558	5.39
11	Diet problems in drug abuser	554	5.32
12	Management and treatment of hallucinogen substances use	551	5.17
13	Management and treatment of alcoholic substances use	516	4.68

**Table 2. Physicians' attitude about previous courses based on Likert scale**

Question	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Previous meetings attended satisfaction	5%	24%	37%	28%	6%
Effectiveness and applicability of MMT course	16%	38%	41%	4%	2%

In conclusion, the results suggest that physicians were very interested in expanding their abilities and knowledge, and they were not properly satisfied from previous courses, and preferred new topics for ongoing CME, practical and effective courses and retraining for MMT courses. Results of study referred to related educational units for ongoing CME planning.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors thank Dr. N. Khosravi and Mrs L. Rezaeian for their assistance.

#### Declaration of interest:

None to be declared.

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