The main aim of this work was to pilot and develop a self-guided workshop to be used in BSDHT regional groups for continued professional development (CPD). The growing number of regional groups offering the workshop format to broaden the CPD element of the regional meetings was behind the motivation to explore and adapt established training tools, for the purpose of self-guided learning in a group environment. Conventional methods of lectures, workshops and seminars are all valuable forms of learning but all have their own obstacles, depending on the learner. Sometimes a compromise has to be made between the available resources (in terms of man, money and time) and the method and quality of the learning in terms of reliability, validity, objectivity and practicability.

Assessment of clinical competence is an essential requirement of dental health professionals’ education. Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE), was developed in the 1970’s and has gained acceptance as a benchmark for clinical skills assessment. The OSCE is defined as “an approach to the assessment of clinical competence in which the components of competence are assessed in a well-planned or structured way with attention being paid to objectivity” or as an assessment of well-defined clinical skills. An OSCE requires each student to demonstrate specific skills and behaviours in a simulated work environment with standardised patients. It typically consists of a circuit or series of short assessment tasks (stations), each of which is assessed by an examiner using a predetermined, objective marking scheme. The OSCE has become a well-established method of assessment in medical education and is increasingly being used as a method of assessment in dentistry and allied health curricula. The OSCE can be a reasonably reliable, valid and objective method of assessment, but its main drawback is that it is resource-intensive.

The appropriate selection of a method of learning can improve the delegate’s learning style and ultimate performance from the information received. Faulty methods of learning or misinterpretation of information received can lead to wrong decisions that might be litigious in practice.

Whilst it is difficult to utilise the OSCE as a method to assess CPD it was thought that a modification of this method could be utilised in the form of a Self Guided Workshop. This was therefore developed and set up to update delegates on current tobacco cessation support. Delegates were divided into groups of between 8 - 10 people and asked to work their way through a powerpoint presentation, which took 10 -15 minutes to complete. They were also given a slide handout to keep for future reference. At the end of the presentation delegates were given a question sheet to complete to test their learning. Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT) Products and literature relating to tobacco cessation were also available for delegates to familiarise themselves with throughout the presentation.

Delegates’ marks were subsequently entered onto a spreadsheet to analyze both individual and group performance.

Results: Individual

- 15% of delegates felt they did not learn effectively in this format
- 22% felt that they learned some additional information
- 63% felt that this format for CPD was an effective tool for update information

Results: Group

- Smallest group achieved the highest overall % pass mark and gave the most positive feedback
- The 2 groups of 7 had the only failures at evaluation but were generally satisfied with this mode of tuition
- The largest group had 100% pass rate with the most varied feedback
Learning styles and formats are important considerations in any form of education as this workshop clearly identified.

Suggested Improvements:

- Set an automatic fixed running time for the presentation
- Reduce group size from 10 to 5
- Provide a physical briefing for each of the groups – possibly a video clip
- Consider the use of a video clip detailing an ex-smokers experience of NRT
- Speaker on slide show to make more interesting
- Very brief presentation.
- Could do with more laptops.
- Fine without a supervisor, however a manned station may be more productive.
- Would have liked to recap on missed questions.
- Very brief presentation. Wouldn't have liked to do this.
- A very quick presentation.
- Very useful, longer presentation would be good.
- Would have liked to recap on missed questions.
- Should have had a physical briefing for each group.
- It was a good way of providing valuable information in a short space of time.
- Good recap. Could have done with separate room due to noise from other group.
- Nice succinct delivery of information. Better on individual laptops or large screen.
- A very quick presentation.
- Very brief presentation.
- The use of an ex-smoker speaking would be useful to see what they used and how they became an ex-smoker.
- Speaker on slide show to make more interesting.
- Could do with more laptops.
- Nice succinct delivery of information. Better on individual laptops or large screen.
- A very quick presentation.
- Very brief presentation.
- The use of an ex-smoker speaking would be useful to see what they used and how they became an ex-smoker.
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