



Expanding HIV Care Networks Across Vancouver Island Using Technology-Enabled Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

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Learning Objective: Participants will be able to describe the value of technology-enabled learning for conducting CPD in geographically dispersed communities.

Background

HIV infection is now a chronic manageable condition; people living with HIV (PLWH) have life expectancies similar to the uninfected population. Thus, family physicians (FPs) need to expand knowledge of HIV care. Vancouver Island (VI) has 172 HIV-experienced FPs, mostly in large urban centers like Victoria, thus PLWH across VI have difficulty accessing care. The purpose of this educational innovation was to provide accessible, relevant CPD for FPs on VI, increasing HIV knowledge and initiating a network of local HIV expertise.

Summary of the Innovation

Workshops took place in 2014 and 2016, incorporating expert presentations, case-based learning, and participant-driven discussion. Presenters provided comprehensive resources for FPs, community workers, and patients. Educators were challenged with ensuring workshops were accessible throughout VI, a diverse region with small urban, rural, and remote communities. To facilitate participation, technology-enabled learning (TEL) was utilized. Workshops were delivered by presenters in Victoria who were virtually connected to multiple videoconference sites across VI. The 2016 iteration also utilized webconferencing, allowing participants to join from any device with an internet connection. Facilitators were trained on best practices for working with dispersed groups.

Conclusion

Participants reported increased knowledge of HIV care and community resources, increased sense of connection with specialists, and planned to expand their scope of HIV care. It is hoped these changes will allow PLWH better access to care. Webconference participants commented on ease of connection and ability to participate without travelling. The value of TEL appears to be particularly salient when education is used to connect a specific, geographically dispersed, group.

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