
OP36 Medical education on a massive scale: Evaluating an Irish Massive Online Open Course (MOOC) on exercise prescription
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Rationale

Online learning has been shown to be effective at enabling medical professionals to fulfil continuing professional development goals. However, little is known about student's expectations, concerns and experiences of such courses. This paper examined student perspectives of an online postgraduate certificate in clinical exercise.

Methods

A multi-method approach using qualitative content and quantitative survey analysis was used to analyse student contributions on the course virtual learning environment (n=20 students). Data analysed included pre-course expectations and concerns, and post-module evaluation surveys. Qualitative data were analysed using NVivo 11 software.

Findings

The most frequently expressed pre-course expectation was to learn and meet academic challenges (n=87 expressions). The second most cited expectation was to change their approach to clinical situations or career (n=50). The most frequently expressed pre-course concern was an inability to meet academic standards due to personal circumstances (n=14) or poor academic skills (n=11), and the inability to manage course workload (n=11). Post module feedback echoed pre-course expectations and concerns. Students felt supported although some had difficulties keeping up with the workload. Over ninety per cent of survey responders rated learning materials provided as either good or very good. Students enjoyed the online nature of the course although some expressed a desire for practical classes.

Discussion / Conclusion

Student perspectives of the online course were largely positive. The online nature of the course meant that clinicians could engage with education without taking time off work, however this approach may have caused concern about ability to complete the course, and perceived difficulty keeping up with the workload.