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# **SECTION I: INTRODUCTION**

## **A) THE WORKSHOP**

### **1. BACKGROUND**

#### What is Evidence-Based Clinical Practice?

The most popular definition characterizes evidence-based clinical practice as the conscientious, explicit and judicious use of current best evidence in making decisions about the care of individual patients.

EBCP involves a number of skills. These include:

- Defining clinical questions in a way that allows clear answers (*Ask*)
- Efficient searching for the best information to answer the question (*Acquire*)
- Appraising the evidence to determine its strength (*Appraise*)
- Extracting the clinical message from the information (*Apply*)
- Applying that information to ones' patients, including weighing risks and benefits in the context of patient values and preferences (*Act*)

### **2. OBJECTIVES**

An overarching objective of the workshop is to renew and enhance participants' enthusiasm about learning EBCP, and to kindle their imagination about ways to improve their learning and incorporation of the concepts into clinical practice. After participation in the Evidence-Based Clinical Practice workshop, the learner will develop the knowledge base and/or skill set to:

- Advance their evidence-based clinical practice skills
- Understand and describe the process of incorporating Evidence-Based Medicine into clinical practice
- Apply evidence-based clinical practice skills to real-world clinical problems
- Demonstrate ability to solve clinically oriented problems in an interactive problem-based small group learning format
- Identify high quality evidence-based resources for the purpose of patient care and continuing education through independent learning

### **3. HOW WE ACHIEVE THESE OBJECTIVES**

While the workshop includes a mix of large-group and small-group sessions, the major venue for learning will be in your small group. The groups work together to help one another advance their evidence-based practice skills.

## **B) HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE WORKSHOP**

### **1. CLINICAL PROBLEM PACKAGES**

The second section of this manual contains a set of teaching modules dealing with evidence-based clinical practice and critical appraisal issues in therapy, diagnostic test, prognosis, harm, systematic review, clinical practice guideline, economic analysis, qualitative methods, clinical

decision rule, screening and differential diagnosis.

The clinical problems in these packages are specialty-specific (according to the clinical area you named on your application and the best fit we could make with your background and those of other participants) but the overall format is the same for all workshop participants. Each of these packages contains:

- an outline of the goals and objectives of the package
- a clinical scenario describing a patient problem
- one or more clinical papers pertinent to the problem posed in the scenario
- some worksheets for organizing ideas as readers work through articles

Participants evaluate the clinical papers and complete the worksheet using the relevant section of an evidence-based practice text they receive, *Users' Guides to the Medical Literature*.

We think of these packages as a fall back. Better would be for you to bring your own clinical problems, and articles from the medical literature related to those problems, to the small group sessions - see the next section.

## 2. SMALL GROUP SESSIONS

As you will see from the program, we have scheduled eight small group sessions and these will be the primary learning forum of the workshop. Each group will have approximately eight participants, two tutors experienced in teaching evidence-based clinical practice and critical appraisal in the small group environment, a tutor-trainee and a librarian.

Each group will meet on Monday evening, review the members' goals and, building on prior online interaction, and begin their work. As much as possible, participants are grouped according to clinical specialty and level of EBCP expertise. Each group will chart its own course.

As with most educational activities, you are likely to get the most out of the workshop if you prepare beforehand.

### SEARCHING SKILLS

A key component of EBCP is 'efficient searching for the best information to answer the question'. To help you to enhance your skills, most groups, and if we have enough librarians every group, will have its own librarian. The major roles of the librarian are to assist in the construction of well-built questions; the identification of high quality evidence-based resources; the development and enhancement of searching skills.

The librarian's expertise can be used by the group in tutorial sessions, in a scheduled 2-hour computer lab session or by individual students and tutors during study time or drop-in lab sessions. Most groups choose to have one computer laboratory session, typically co-run by a participant and librarian or a participant who had worked out the session's content with the librarian beforehand. How this session might be handled is up to each group, but it is important to remember that you have access to a skilled librarian who was chosen based upon her/his knowledge of EBM, small group teaching and searching. Please plan to take advantage of this opportunity!

Searching on your own to address your real questions and cases to make the experience authentic and to maximize your learning will require library work, either at home before you come, or at McMaster. The Health Sciences Library, located within McMaster Health Sciences Centre, is open from 8:00 a.m. to 9:45 p.m. (Monday-Thursday), and 8:00 a.m. to 7:45 p.m. (Friday). A staff member will be available throughout the week to help locate articles. You can conduct searches on a number of databases free in the library with or without the help of a librarian. As you develop your own materials we encourage you to seek assistance, as needed, from the librarian, tutors, and tutor trainee.

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