

Prospective trial assessing the impact of an online survey tool on written feedback by emergency physicians on emergency medicine trainees

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Background and Objectives

- **Background**

- Emergency Medicine trainees are routinely evaluated as they progress through their training program.
 - Input from a good number of emergency physicians permits a more balanced and accurate assessment
 - Obtaining sufficient input has been difficult using a simple email request

- **Objectives**

- To determine if a web-based survey improves
 - The proportion of emergency physicians responding
 - The number of meaningful feedback comments
 - The total word count of feedback

Methods

- Over four successive quarterly assessment periods, a request for feedback by email was sent to all emergency physicians
 - Period 1: A simple email request was sent
 - Periods 2-4: An email was sent with a link to an online survey tool which had free text boxes and a rating scale
- Data collected
 - Proportion of available emergency physicians responding
 - The number of meaningful comments
 - Assessed by the two investigators and the results averaged
 - Total word count
- The emergency physicians were unaware of the study
- Local hospital ethics committee approval was obtained

Screenshot of Survey

Trainee Feedback 2012.1 (Staff Specialist)

2. Provisional Training:

1. Allocate most appropriate response

	Unacceptable	Below Expected	Expected	Above Expected	Outstanding
Knowledge	<input type="radio"/>				
Procedural Skills	<input type="radio"/>				
Supervision and Education	<input type="radio"/>				
Attitudes and Ethics	<input type="radio"/>				
Overall Performance	<input type="radio"/>				

2. Areas of strength

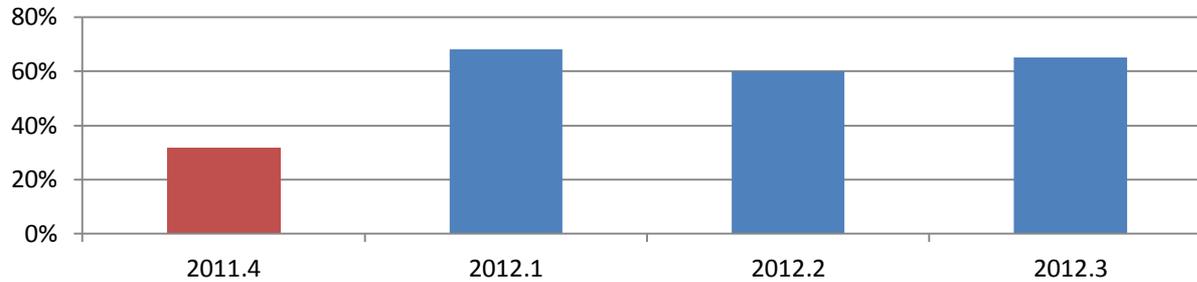
3. Areas to improve

4. Other comments

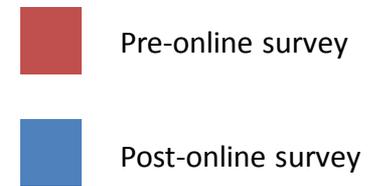
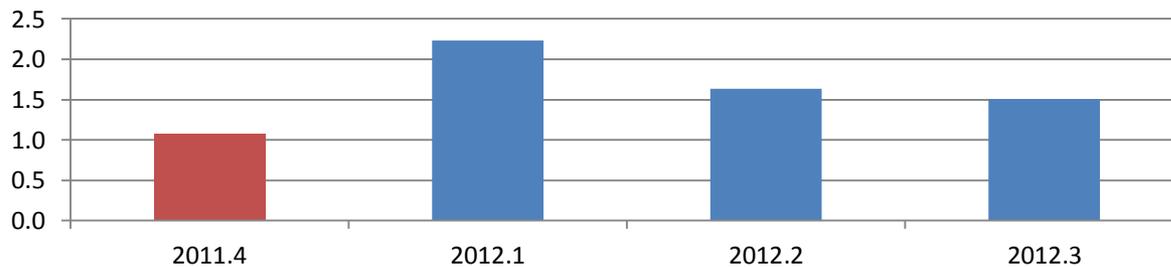
NB: Only the content in the free text boxes was included in this study for comparison. The single response rating scale question (Q1) was not included.

Principal Findings

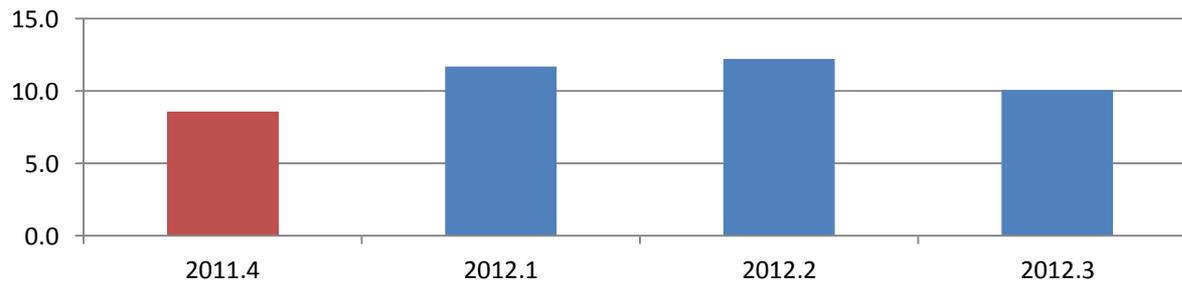
Percentage of available emergency physicians responding



Number of comments per available emergency physician per trainee



Number of words per available emergency physician per trainee



Discussion

- Did this online survey approach improve the overall feedback gathering process?
 - Clear improvement in response rates
 - Improvement in overall number of comments and word count
 - The incorporation of the single choice rating scale is another significant benefit of this approach
- This approach has now been adopted and has been extended for some non-trainees as well

Limitations

- There are many potential limitations including
 - Pre-online survey was only one study period
 - Change of emergency physicians and trainees through the year
 - Single centre with small numbers
 - Subjectivity of what constitutes a meaningful comment
 - Author 2 consistently found 20% more comments than author 1

Conclusion, Conflicts and Acknowledgements

- Conclusion
 - The use of an online survey tool was associated with a clear increase in the proportion of respondents and a lesser increase in both the number of meaningful comments and the total word count.
- Conflicts of interest
 - None
- Acknowledgements
 - Thanks to Dr. Deanne Crosbie (co-DEMT) for ongoing support and input into setting up this study