

# ONLINE VS. FACE-TO-FACE: A COMPARISON OF COURSE OUTCOMES FOR SEXUAL HEALTH NURSING EDUCATION

## Authors:

Ingram S<sup>1</sup>, Jaworski A<sup>1</sup>, Maunsell S<sup>1</sup>, Ma S<sup>1</sup>, Tunley F<sup>1</sup>, Bennett C<sup>1</sup>, Hassall M<sup>1</sup>, Michaels J<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Australasian Society for HIV, Viral Hepatitis and Sexual Health Medicine (ASHM), Sydney, Australia*

## Background/Purpose:

Traditionally ASHM courses were delivered face-to-face. To comply with COVID-19 restrictions, ASHM adapted sexual health nursing courses STI and BBV Nursing: An Introduction and STI and BBV Nursing: Management and Care (M&C) from face-to-face to online delivery. During this process, ASHM wanted to ensure this new delivery method did not negatively affect course outcomes for participants. After a year of online delivery, course survey results were studied to assess the impact online delivery had on participant outcomes.

## Methods:

Quantitative and qualitative analysis was done to compare the face-to-face and online course outcomes of two STI and BBV Nursing courses, Introduction and M&C. Course outcomes were identified using data collected in the pre-course and post-course surveys. 14 face-to-face courses were delivered in 2019-20 and 10 online courses in 2020-21.

## Results:

Self-reported confidence in understanding and performing relevant patient care tasks was measured pre-course and immediate post-course. Participants in both face-to-face and online groups recorded a statistically significant ( $p < 0.001$ ) difference in average self-reported between pre and post time points. For online participants, there was a median 1.3 point increase (Introduction) and 0.8 point increase (M&C) in average confidence. For face-to-face participants, there was a median 2 point increase (Introduction) and 1.1 point increase (M&C) in average confidence.

Attendees also demonstrated this increase in confidence in written feedback. When reflecting on how the course would improve their clinical practice, both groups wrote they had greater confidence discussing and delivering STI and BBV services.

## Conclusion:

Course delivery conversion did not negatively impact course outcomes for participants attending ASHM's online sexual health nursing courses. As restrictions lift, education providers can be confident that delivering online education alongside face-to-face courses still results in positive outcomes for attendees. This is an exciting opportunity, particularly for nurses living in regional and remote Australia, to have greater access to quality education.

## Disclosure of interest statement:

The authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.