

Title: Development of accreditation of continued professional development (CPD) in Myanmar

Authors: Wunna Tun, Tin Tin Hla, Htin Aung Saw, Rai Mra

What problem was addressed: Although the Myanmar Medical Association (MMA) organizes and delivers a range of continuing medical education (CME) activities, doctors in Myanmar rarely attend. A CME database that tracks physician attendance indicates a low rate of participation. Access to programs and quality of CME opportunities have been suggested as possible reasons for lack of attendance. To better understand why doctors were infrequently participating, we sought information about the barriers to participation. In addition, if quality of programs is a significant factor inhibiting attendance, this will serve as impetus for development of an accreditation process for CME activities.

What was tried: A survey of physicians was conducted, using a randomized sample of doctors who attended CME/CPD sessions to assess barriers to participation. We also asked for their recommendations to overcome their perceived barriers. A majority of respondents indicated that their clinical schedule and loss of income due to absence from clinic prevented them from attending. Other factors cited included lack of clinical relief coverage, long distance to the course venue, program fees, family responsibilities, and lack of support from supervisors. A pilot of a learning management system for CME was introduced.

What lessons were learned: The barriers to CME participation can be solved. Financial factors in the form of lost clinical income and CME fees were major factors, in addition to geographic distance. Time away from clinical practice appears to be a major factor. This may be amenable to greater distribution of programs throughout the country as well as implementation of distance learning events. A shortage of doctors may be a persistent challenge contributing to clinical pressures. Concerns about quality may be addressed by a system of accreditation of CME programs.