Use of Internet-based Medical Resources by the Nicaraguan Medical Community

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Background

- As one of the poorest countries in the Americas, medical care in Nicaragua is limited by the inability to obtain proprietary educational material.
- **Project SEMILLA** (Strengthening Emergency Medicine Investing in Learners in Latin America) has developed free-access courses in emergency care.
- Understanding how the Nicaraguan medical community currently accesses and uses internet-based medical resources may help us determine the best way to disseminate free-access emergency medical information

Objectives

- To determine accessibility and comfort level with internet-based medical resources of Nicaraguan physicians and medical trainees.

Methods

Design

- Prospective, anonymous, voluntary survey questionnaire of physicians, residents and medical students
- Surveys were undertaken at two national Nicaraguan medical schools with their associated teaching hospitals (UNAN Leon and UNAN Managua) and one district hospital in Chinandega (Hospital España).

Measures

- Demographic Characteristics (age, gender, training level, hospital location, specialty), prior training in internet-based learning, devices and websites used.

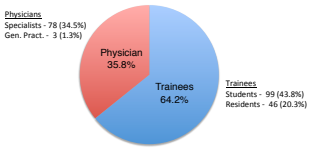
Analysis

- Descriptive Statistics were used for demographics.
- Outcomes were compared by training level and location using χ^2 or Fisher's Exact tests

Results

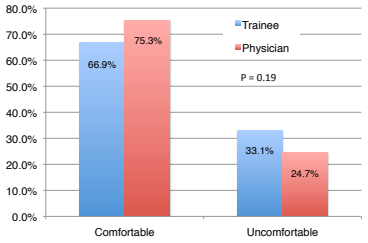
- In total, 226 surveys were obtained from various levels of training and hosptial locations.

Distribution of Surveys by Level of Training

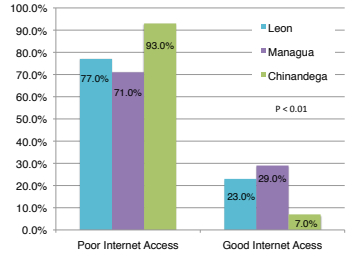


Distribution of Surveys by Location of Hospital

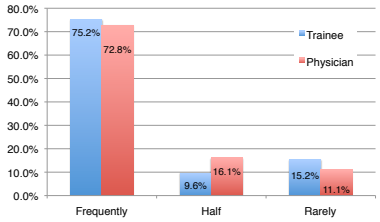
Comfort Level of Using the Internet by Level of Training



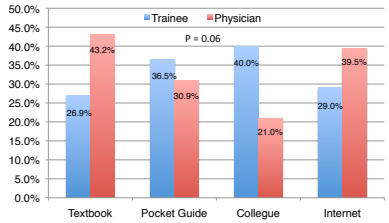
Internet Access in Hospital by Location



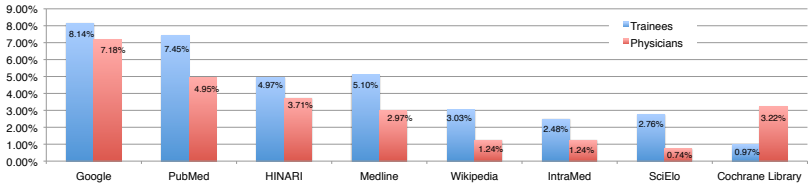
Frequency of Internet Consultation for New Medical Information by Level of Training



Most Frequent Resource Used While in the Hospital by Level of Training

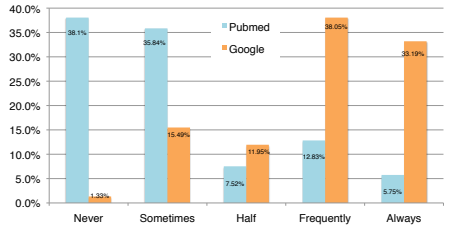


Most Popular Websites for Medical Information by Level of Training



Results

Use of PubMed vs. Google While Searching for New Medical information



Conclusions

- The Nicaraguan medical community is using the internet for medical information, but has limited access during patient care.
- When using internet-based resources for medical information, Google and other less sophisticated internet search methods are common
- This data will be used by **Project SEMILLA** to determine how best to share medical information with our Nicaraguan colleagues.

Limitations

- Unequal proportion of trainees sampled vs. physicians
- Does not represent the third medical school branch in UNAN Bluefields
- May not be representative of trainees and faculty in private medical institutions

Acknowledgements

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