Introduction

The Ohio University Heritage College of Osteopathic Medicine launched a new extension campus in which students experience live, synchronous learning activities. Instructors teach primarily from one site, while up to two other sites watch from a distance. Research to date has focused on the effect of distance learning via video conference on student academic performance, student perception of the teaching modality, and student evaluations of lectures, with no analysis to our knowledge of student evaluations of faculty. We therefore investigated the effect of synchronous teaching via video conference on student evaluations of faculty by comparing differences in evaluations from local and distant medical students.

Methods

Design: Compared teaching evaluations of 68 faculty members from the main and extension campuses.

Participants: There were 118 and 50 students at the main campus and extension campus respectively. Approximately 90% of these students completed the evaluation for each of the 68 faculty evaluation data used in this study.

Instrument: The faculty evaluation survey is an 8-item Likert scale (1=strongly Disagree, Strongly Agree=6).

Procedure: The data in this study was collected from the same cohort of students for a period of two academic years. The overall faculty mean evaluation scores was calculated by averaging the score for the 8 items for each faculty member. Overall faculty mean evaluation scores were further split by campus (main campus score & extension campus score) then coded as matched or mismatched - matched if students were evaluating faculty on their local campus and a mismatch when student were evaluating faculty teaching them from a different site.

Analysis

Paired-sample t tests examined if faculty evaluation ratings differed between campus sites and matched vs. mismatched student-faculty location conditions.

Results

Preliminary findings of this study suggest that both distance and site affiliation may influence students' learning experiences.

- We found that students at a distance submit lower teaching evaluations than those watching the same lecture on-site.
- Given that many students may have opted to watch recordings of lectures rather than attending them in person, the effects of distance learning may also be influenced by site affiliation; students may rate same-site faculty higher than off-site faculty, even when viewing a video of the activity. Additional research is needed to investigate this possibility.

Teaching evaluations decline with the addition of off-site campuses, and presents a faculty-independent variable in regards to student evaluations of teaching effectiveness.

Conclusions

Figure 1. Main campus videoconference learning environment.

Figure 2. Extension campus videoconference learning environment.

Figure 3. Mean faculty ratings by campus location of faculty for matched student-faculty location and mismatched student–faculty location. Error bars represent standard deviation

* denotes p = 0.000

References


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