

Decision-Making Capacity Assessment (DMCA) Training for Physicians

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Context: Physicians play a key role in DMCA. However, many do not feel prepared based on their residency training. They, thus, often require additional training once in practice. To address this need, we developed and administered an interactive DMCA Workshop to familiarize physicians with a DMCA model, including concepts of capacity, the protocol, documents, and case studies.

Objective: To determine the effect of the DMCA Workshop on physicians' confidence and comfort with decision-making capacity assessments.

Design: Pre-test-post-test design. We administered a questionnaire before and after the Workshop. The questionnaire asked participants to rate their agreement (4-point Likert-type scale) on 15 statements regarding awareness, confidence, and understanding of core concepts of capacity.

Participants: All physicians who attended three workshops in 2014.

Intervention: A 3-hour DMCA Workshop accredited by the College of Family Physicians Canada for 3 Mainpro-C credits.

Outcome Measures: (1) Mean ratings on the questionnaire items; (2) Demographic data (age, sex, years of practice, prior DMCA training).

Analysis: Descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation); Sign Test to compare pre- and post-workshop ratings; Analysis of Variance to determine differences in ratings across demographic characteristics.

Results: There were 137 participants with an average age of 46 years: 55% females; 64% with ≥ 6 years of medical practice; and 54% with no prior DMCA training. The post-workshop ratings were mostly Agrees and Strongly Agrees (Mean ratings: 3.09-4.27; Range: 1-4). The highest positive differences were seen for problem solving techniques, understanding a trigger, knowledge and skill-set in regards to capacity assessments, standardized approach, and awareness of legislative acts. Among the participants, those without prior DMCA training exhibited the largest change in pre- versus post-workshop ratings ($p < 0.05$).

Conclusion: This study has shown that a DMCA Workshop was effective in training Family Physicians. The next step is to customize the Workshop to Family Physicians' needs.