

Train-the-Trainers Workshop, Angra dos Reis, Brazil, 5–9 November, 2007

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The Train-the-Trainers Workshop was held in Angra dos Reis, a beautiful Brazilian city south of Rio de Janeiro on the Atlantic Ocean, in the mild spring climate. Forty-six gastroenterologists from all over the world were able to attend lectures given by outstanding and well-known experts in gastroenterology. In addition to the beautiful location for the workshop and the friendly reception provided, the lecturers were very well prepared and were accessible to the participants throughout the whole course.

The idea behind the course—learning how to become a better teacher oneself—was a new and very refreshing one for me, and this was the first time I had attended this type of workshop. The group consisted of gastroenterologists from different parts of the world, with various skills and interests, and we were able to accomplish and complete a wide variety of tasks together.

The aims of the course were presented at the welcoming reception. The first session started with introductory lectures, followed by a discussion. Other topics included methods of appraising research studies in a critical way, how to present papers at meetings, how to search for information in the medical literature, evidence-based medicine, and credentialing for gastroenterologists. Topics that I found particularly valuable personally were the sessions on the design of clinical studies and trials and on how to prepare papers for presentation at meetings, as this forms part of my everyday clinical work.

We received a great deal of useful information during the course, including details of the most important web sites for the literature on gastroenterology and the special services available on the World Gastroenterology Organisation web site, such as the “Ask a Librarian” and “Guidelines” pages. These were the first things I looked at after returning to work following the course.

Challenging tasks at the workshop included chairing a working group session, and in particular presenting a 5-minute paper in a foreign language. Many participants who had been afraid they would not be able to give a presentation did actually do this successfully on the last day of the course. All of the sessions were participatory, and everyone was able to ask questions, state their own opinions, and comment on the various topics. We very much appreciated the four-step approach to teaching that was described, which will certainly change my own attitude toward working with medical students.

The cultural events that had been arranged provided another way of getting to know the participants from various parts of the world, and it was fascinating to hear enthusiastic presentations of the traditions of other countries and cultures. It also helped establish a team spirit that brought the group together and enabled it to appreciate the individual members’ different talents.

The trainers used different approaches to teaching, always with the aim of bringing out the maximum from the participants, and I would like to congratulate them on

conducting such a successful workshop and achieving the highest standards in educating health professionals involved in teaching work. I would also like to express my gratitude for being given the opportunity to attend such an outstanding event.

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