

**Train the Trainer Workshop**  
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The workshop was conducted in a very nice area of Portugal, in a relaxing atmosphere, helped by a nice warm weather and a “no necktie” policy! The workshop was attended by 44 participants from 20 different countries with 10 faculty members.

The expected objectives of the workshop- as stated by the participants during an open discussion on the evening preceding the workshop- were almost identical to the objectives set by the organizers as described in the workshop book. The comment which was made by most participants was: ‘we all teach and train medical students, residents and fellows, but nobody has taught us how to teach and we do not know whether we are doing it properly’. Other workshop objectives dealt with critical appraisal of studies, evidence based medicine, art of presentations, how to search for information in literature, credentialing GI physicians, concept of clinical research and finally how to get studies published.

During the workshop, most of these objectives were met and the related topics were well covered and discussed. Some of the simple take home messages that one cannot forget are:

- 1- The old 'one way' teaching in medical schools (from the almighty PROFESSOR to the poor student) where the student is just bombarded with dry material and information is over. Consecutive one hour lectures are replaced by small group discussions. As nicely stated by Dr Robin Teague 'education is about lighting fires not filling buckets'. Mixing education with fun greatly enhances its effect.
- 2- The ability to teach complex procedural skills is not innate. A complex procedure should be broken down into small components. Such teaching should go through 4 steps: i-the teacher does the procedure, ii-the teacher explains the different steps, iii-the trainee explains the different steps of the procedure, iv- the trainee does the procedure under close supervision explaining what he is doing at every step.
- 3- Do not be slave of guidelines. Guidelines are to guide not to dictate
- 4- Do not believe all what you read and do not take studies conclusions for granted. In clinical trials, simple questions are to be asked: Is the sample size adequate? Is the methodological quality acceptable? A detailed knowledge of statistics is most often not needed to answer these questions. If you have doubts, visit Cochrane Library!
- 5- Do not start a clinical trial before asking the 20 questions set by Dr Christian Gluud!

We achieved far more than just the stated objectives. I can briefly summarize them in five areas of humanities and science:

- 1- Politics: The workshop was able to prove that well established boundaries between different populations can be easily abolished. The remedy for political,

- geographical, religious or ethnic boundaries is a civilized discussion especially under the realm of science and medicine which can destroy and cross any boundaries or borders.
- 2- Sociology: The theory stating that in any nation, country, community, society or even in a group of people, you can always find the good, the bad and the evil was rejected in the workshop with a  $p < 0.00000$  !!
  - 3- Physics: The workshop was able to discover many 'potential energies' and transform them into 'kinetic energies'! Many participants did not know that they have the potential to present data in a nice, organized way especially in a foreign language. Amazingly, they succeeded in changing their potentials into kinetics and acquire the confidence in doing it. A great achievement was made in this area.
  - 4- Sport: the team building event was successful, discovered some hidden talents and was a good start for enhancing the group spirit during group discussions.
  - 5- Economics: participants were so busy during the 4 days that no one had the time to spend any money". This is a proof that one can travel long distances with very little expenses!

After all the success of the present and the previous TTT workshops, I believe it is time to move one or two steps forward. For the ultimate objective of these activities to be achieved, the number of workshops should mushroom. This can only happen if the participants are able to hold mini-TTT workshops in their countries or regions. Therefore, it is time to try to move from 'Train the Trainer to Train a **Trainee**' to 'Train the Trainer to Train a **Trainer**'. One way of doing that is to invite one or two participants from every

workshop to be on the faculty in one of the next TTT workshops so that they get more experience in training trainers.

In addition, a more advanced workshop is now needed for gastroenterologists who are heavily involved in academic medicine i.e. teaching, research or administration. Suggested topics might include: problem based learning; advanced statistics; introduction to management, marketing, budgeting and finance; advanced communication skills; leadership; research proposal writings and grant applications; curriculum development; writing written exams to medical students; how to evaluate and be evaluated by students... Finally, I think all participants in this workshop should praise and thank the WGO and the faculty of the TTT workshop for a project for a well-conceived project, well-planned and superbly executed”), I am sure this could not have happened without the wonderful work of the TTT secretaries and administrators as well as the kindness and the great hospitality of our Portuguese hosts.