



UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI SIENA

Teaching Evidence-Based Medicine skills in an unsupporting environment: the slow pace of the University of Siena towards EBM

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**2nd International
Conference of Evidence-Based
Health Care
Teachers & Developers**

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University of Siena

Established: 1240

Students 20,000

Teachers 900

School of Medicine 3000

Teachers 300

Graduate Students 1000

Frequency = 100/120 per year

Strong expectancy of tradition by students and teachers

EBM-specific Core Curriculum



- **University of Florence**

- Modules: 3

- Credits 5/185

- **University of Siena**

- Modules: 0

- Credits: 0/158

Unlike the nearby University of Florence, Siena doesn't offer EBM in the core curriculum (Battle of Montaperti between Siena and Florence, 1260)

Opportunity: Offering an Optional Course

- **Evidence-Based Medicine in Respiratory Medicine**
- Small Group(s)
- Required:
 - Basic clinical background
 - Be able to read English
- Not required: Computer literacy
- 5-6 sessions of about 2-3 hours (~15 hrs)

Main Teaching Resources

.Practicing Evidence-Based
Medicine 3rd ed. Radcliffe Med
1998

.GIMBE web site, www.gimbe.it

.Cochrane Library

.Infotriever trial ed
(infopoems.com)

**5 Editions to date
(1998-2003)**



Topics

- .What is and what isn't
- .Answerable Questions
- .Sources of Evidence
- .Getting Evidence
- .Evaluating Evidence
 - .Diagnosis (LR)
 - .Treatment (NNT)
- .Applying Evidence

Optional Activities 1998-2002

- **Evidence-Based Medicine**
- Teacher: P. Sestini
- Credits: 2.0
- Small Groups
- Students: 4-10
- **Tobacco smoke: health effects and role of health caregivers**
- Teacher: P. Sestini
- Credits: 1.5
- Interactive seminars
- Students: 75-50 (>50% of the class)

Two courses, same teacher, quite different attendance!

Barriers

- Computer literacy (improving with time)
- English Language (poor teaching in high school)
- Resources/Facilities (improving)
- Math Phobia
- Support from Authorities
- Recognition/Awareness
- Interest/Perceived importance

Future opportunities

- A Problem-Based Learning course based on Small Group Technology started in 2001
 - Over 20 teachers trained as small group tutors
 - A course on identification and retrieval of scientific literature completed by the group in 2003 for all the students of 2nd year
 - This group could be the basis for an EBM module in the future
- **Sneaking EBM in a course on the use of palmtop computer in daily clinical practice**

Conclusions

- . When Evidence Based Medicine is not included in the mainstream courses, students fail to perceive it as relevant to their medical education.
- . Even then, opportunities may be found to offer teaching and to train small groups of rewardingly enthusiastic students
- . Pressure from the outside, particularly from the healthcare system, may improve the perception of the relevance of EBHC by students and academy
- . Even in difficult conditions, teaching EBM is **still fun!**