

WHAT MOTIVATES STUDENTS TO ATTEND OUR SHORT STATISTICS COURSES? PRESENTATION OF THEIR EXPERIENCES AND PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENT

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The UCL Institute of Child Health (ICH) Centre for Paediatric Epidemiology and Biostatistics runs a series of short statistical workshops that attract delegates from inner and outer London, the wider UK, Europe and sometimes beyond. Masters' students and post graduate students form the majority of the audience coming from UCL and other UK universities, while the rest of the delegates are research fellows and assistants, professors, administrative staff, medical professionals, scientists either from UCL ICH or external parties. The audience at these courses differs depending on the taught subject and the reasons for people deciding to attend a statistics course can be very variable. We wanted evidence that we were actually providing to their needs and to find where improvements could be made.

For many years, we have asked students beginning our most basic introductory courses to state what they hope to achieve and, at the end, whether their aims were met. We now formalise this process via an on-line questionnaire survey sent to students after attending short courses in general. By also including students who attended some time previously, we will be able to ascertain any long term benefits or concerns.

The results of the on-line questionnaire survey will be analysed and presented in this poster to provide some evidence of what students think about statistical education in the aftermath of their attendance at a short statistics course and also after a period of time. Discussion will focus on how the students' responses can help educators improve their practices and provide what students of short statistics courses really require.

In particular, the main aims of the questionnaire are:

- To examine how (or if at all) the responders of the survey had hoped to apply the knowledge obtained at the course(s) before attendance and how this related to their practice after attendance. Also to quantify to what extent the course did or did not help them.
- To evaluate how their perspectives have changed in relation to how they view statistics, data collection processes, evaluation of evidence, valid analysis and presentation of results.
- To request proposals and suggestions from the students' point of view that could possibly change and result in improved general statistical education within our institutions.

To summarise, the results of this survey potentially give evidence on what motivates students of short statistics courses and how their thoughts could guide and inform the educators in relation to teaching practice.