

Confidence Boost for NHS Wales Staff Completing IT Training

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The benefits of Information Technology (IT) training to NHS Wales staff is the theme of an article published in the academic journal 'Learning in Health and Social Care' last month.

The article, written by Informing Healthcare's (IHC) research manager and other IHC staff, discusses findings from the Access to Learning project, which ran from 2004 to 2007.

Research conducted during and after the project found that NHS Wales staff who completed training for the [European Computer Driving Licence](#) (ECDL) felt an increase in confidence in undertaking computer tasks, and also towards other general life skills, and staff with clinical contact reported a perceived improvement in the quality of care they gave.

The results are based on 1617 respondents to a questionnaire sent to NHS Wales staff.

The respondents needed to have completed at least British Computer Society (BCS) Level 1 (three ECDL modules) in order to complete the questionnaire.

The respondents came from 22 different healthcare providers across Wales including Trusts, Local Health Boards, Business Service Centres and GP Practices, with respondents derived from over 100 self-defined job roles.

Of the respondents who indicated their job role, 429 (26.5%) had self-defined clinical contact and included doctors, nurses and a wide range of other allied health professionals.

Results showed that for those respondents with clinical contact there is a perceived increase both in the time available with patients and the quality of care, given.

For example, respondents believed they undertook computer orientated tasks more often compared to before undertaking ECDL, but also that they now had increased confidence to undertake these tasks.

For those respondents with clinical contact, 14.1% reported they had more time available with patients and 34.2% had a perceived improvement in the quality of care they gave.

Respondents put this down to two main things, namely more access to information and more time with patients.

Staff with clinical contact with patients in general appear to show an increased and significant level of benefit from ECDL compared to those without clinical contact.

This may be due to the fact that clinical staff did not use computers as much – 35.7% say they use computers more often now compared to 17.1% of non clinical staff.

Furthermore, there may be greater opportunities for improvements compared to those who might have reached a plateau due to more advanced knowledge or repeated undertaking of a task.

The questionnaire was designed to evaluate the views of respondents with respect to four key benefits, namely, time; confidence; frequency and; patient care.

The questionnaire design linked specific questions on benefits to the objectives of ECDL and where appropriate its modules.

<http://www.wales.nhs.uk/newsitem.cfm?contentid=11739>