Teaching Medical School Electives: Beyond Clinical Resources

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BACKGROUND

Second-year medical students are required to take two electives during the fall term. Librarians at Taubman Medical Library submitted proposals to teach two electives, one on Information Management and one on Psychosocial Information. Both proposals were accepted and taught in Fall 2005.

OBJECTIVES

- To explore a holistic approach to information management

- To expose students to a wide range of information tools and resources not typically taught in required courses

- To increase library integration in the medical curriculum
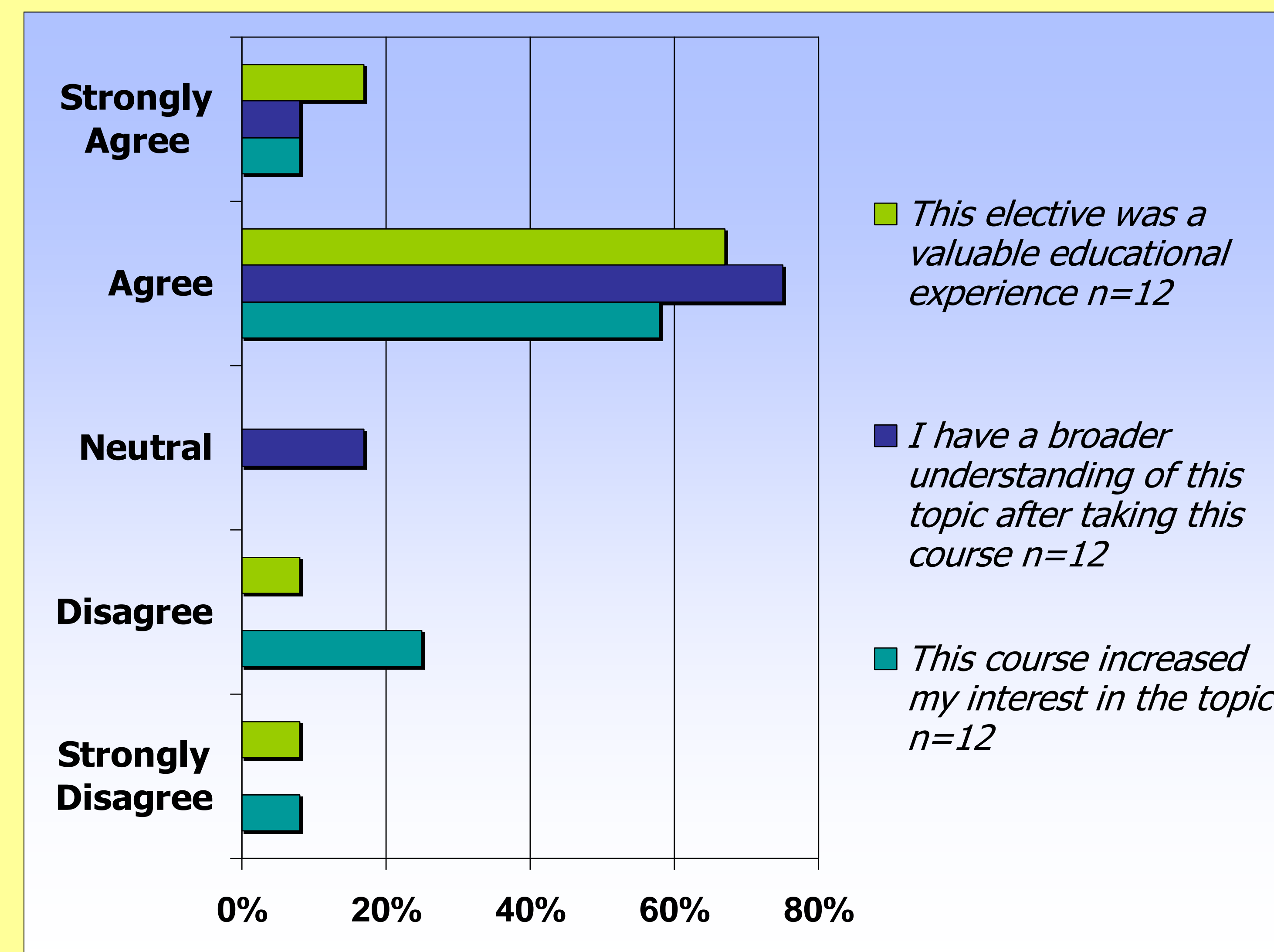
COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

Information Management for the Busy Clinician

This elective explored key areas of information management including selection of resources to find information quickly, expanding research skills with citation searching and additional health literature databases, advanced MEDLINE searching, and managing references with RefWorks. Students explored tools for keeping up with the literature including RSS and podcasts. Educational methods included lecture, hands-on computer exercises, group projects and presentations.
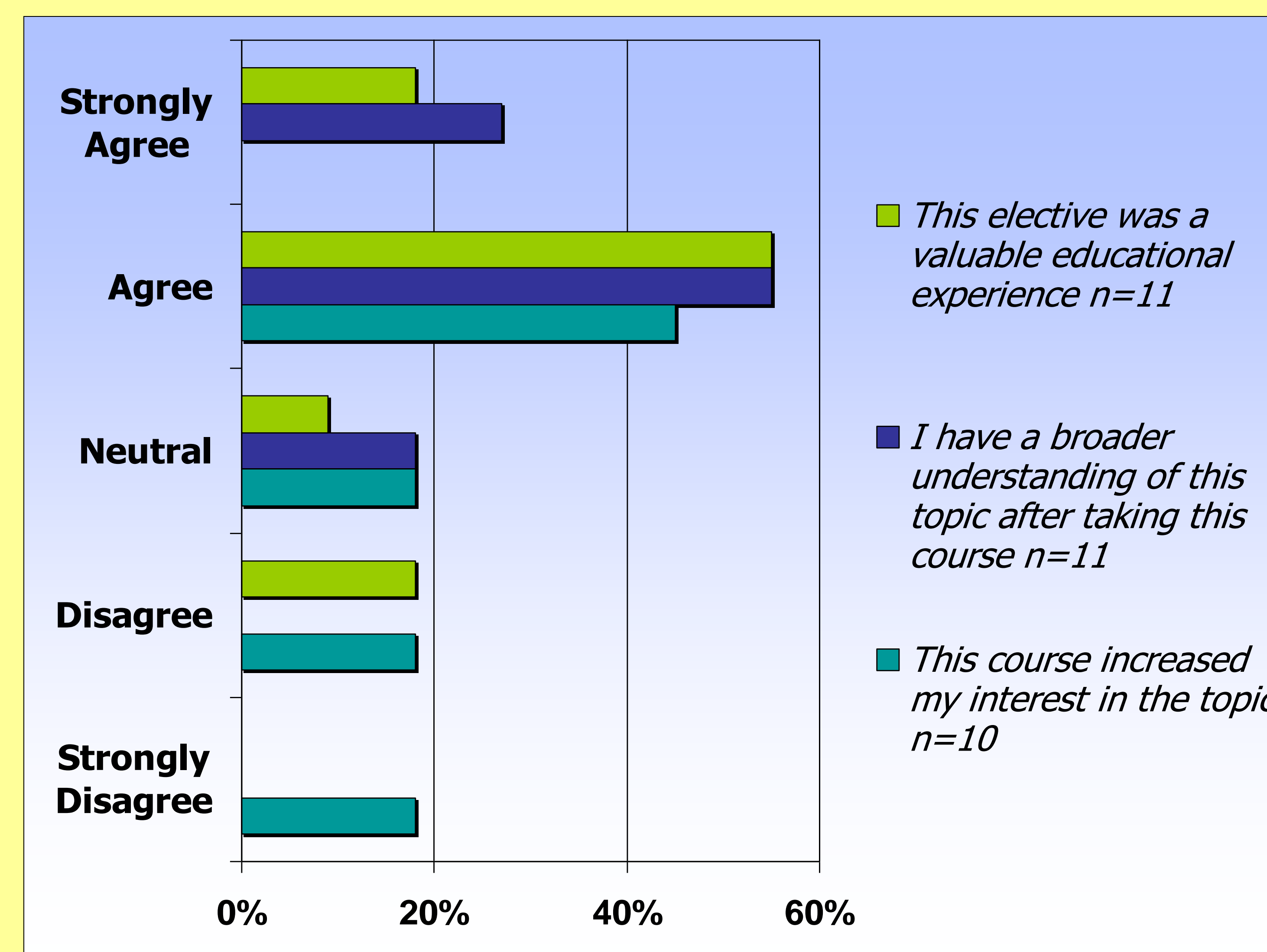
Psychosocial Information in the Clinical Setting

There are a wide range of online sources available to aid clinicians in finding quality psychosocial literature to support patient care. The medical school curriculum includes Longitudinal Cases requiring consideration of topics such as social support, patient anxiety, and psychological impact of chronic disease. This elective offered an introduction to psychosocial information resources such as PsycINFO, SocioFile, Web of Knowledge, and ERIC. Educational methods included lecture, hands-on computer exercises, group projects and presentations.

Information Management for the Busy Clinician-Evaluation

Legend: This elective was a valuable educational experience n=12; I have a broader understanding of this topic after taking this course n=12; This course increased my interest in the topic n=12

Psychosocial Information in the Clinical Setting-Evaluation

Legend: This elective was a valuable educational experience n=11; I have a broader understanding of this topic after taking this course n=11; This course increased my interest in the topic n=10

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Taubman Medical Library
UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

OUTCOMES

- Both electives were fully enrolled (23 students each)

- Positive course evaluations

- Student appreciation for skills taught

- Librarians demonstrated value as educators in the medical curriculum

FUTURE PLANS

- Offer electives in Fall 2006

- Incorporate student feedback to improve courses

- Explore innovative educational methods

- Encourage students to maintain an interest in medical informatics (i.e. lifelong learning)

- Use as a model for informatics instruction in other programs (e.g. GME, School of Nursing, College of Pharmacy)

Student comments:

It is clearly a very useful topic. It definitely showed me a lot more databases that I knew existed. It also went more in depth into Medline, which I found useful.

Some of the information was a little complex.

I learned a lot about the resources available and to use them effectively.

I learned a lot about information sources that I would not have otherwise explored. This will be useful in upcoming LC cases and hopefully on the wards.

Stress how these resources differ from what we already have.

This should be required for everyone during CAM week rather than just an elective. Many students need to improve their researching skills and this is a great way to do it.