

Keele Post Graduate Association (KPA) Bursary - Post-attendance Report

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I wish to express my sincerest gratitude to the Keele Post Graduate Association (KPA) for helping to support my recent training in Conjoint Analysis software, which took place in mid April 2013 in Berlin, Germany.

Conjoint analysis, also called multi-attribute compositional models or stated preference analysis, is a statistical technique that originated in mathematical psychology. My PhD will use this statistical analysis technique to design and conduct an online questionnaire targeted at international expert shoulder clinicians. Expert clinicians will be asked to consider a representative example of a patient and then make a treatment decision as they routinely do in clinical practice. The composition of the example patient presented on screen will change and the conjoint analysis will enable quantification of the expert clinicians' preferences for the presence or absence of individual patient characteristics when considering the clinical decision of which treatment to provide to patients with shoulder pain. Profiles of the likely best responder to three commonly used interventions will be created. These profiles will be tested and employed in various ways later in my PhD.

Training in this method of statistical analysis is offered rarely internationally, typically taking place alternatively in central Europe or East coast America every 18 months. It was therefore vital that I gained the opportunity to attend at this stage of my PhD in order to optimise output from the course during this phase of my PhD. Training took place over 3 days and employed a variety of teaching strategies including lectures, computer seminars, workshops and group work using casework examples. Principle learning objectives included confident differentiation between and appropriate selection of the various forms of Menu-Based Choice (MBC) and Choice-Based Conjoint (CBC) analysis. Furthermore specific sessions were allocated to learning appropriate statistical analysis and interpretation using frequency counts, latent class analysis and Bayesian statistics. The final day of the training included a workshop from full-time practitioners of conjoint analysis. This was a fruitful and lively session with much debate and many useful hints and tips being offered and shared among practitioners, tutors and attendees alike.

This was a tremendously useful training course and I have now not only gained additional skills, resources and experience, I have begun to grow a network of individuals internationally who use conjoint analysis in variety of fora. Thanks and appreciation to the KPA for supporting this learning, development and networking opportunity. I will continue to acknowledge your contribution in future presentations and dissemination of my work using conjoint analysis.