

2. METHODOLOGY

The July 2002 session of Bug Breakfast was evaluated. The topic for the session was meningococcal disease. The following standard procedures for delivering a Bug Breakfast were followed:

- the live site was the Wallumatta Conference Room at the NSW Department of Health, North Sydney;
- the session was advertised by email to staff within the Department's Public Health Division and to metropolitan and rural public health units within NSW;
- trainees from the NSW Public Health Officer Training Program assisted with the organisation and supported the delivery of the session;
- the videoconference was coordinated by the NSW Telehealth Initiative;
- Genesys Conferencing was the external provider who placed the call and provided the bridge between the sites;
- the transmission bandwidth was 256 kbps;
- the videoconference was 'voice activated';
- the session was an hour long with three presenters;
- electronic copies of the presentations (in Microsoft PowerPoint) were supplied by the presenters and distributed by email to the remote sites in advance.

Eleven sites initially requested a connection; however, one site subsequently withdrew. Consequently, 10 remote sites were to be connected on the day (Table 1). For the first time two sites within a single area health service, the Far West, were connected.

A person was identified at each site to facilitate the evaluation. In most cases, this was the person who usually acts as the contact for Bug Breakfast. In addition to their usual responsibilities of advertising the session locally, and receiving and distributing copies of the presentations, the facilitators were provided with written instructions by email describing their responsibilities for the evaluation.

TABLE 1	
Remote sites requesting connection to the July Bug Breakfast	
Area Health Service	Location of Site
Far West	Broken Hill
Far West	Dareton
Hunter	Wallsend
Illawarra	Warrawong
Macquarie	Dubbo
Mid North Coast	Port Macquarie
Mid Western	Orange
New England	Tamworth
Northern Rivers	Lismore
Southern	Queanbeyan

A four part evaluation was implemented at the conclusion of the session:

1. participants at North Sydney and at each of the remote sites were surveyed using an anonymous self-administered questionnaire;
2. facilitators were surveyed by semi-structured interview either via videoconferencing, telephone or email;
3. presenters were interviewed either face to face or via telephone;
4. Trainee Public Health Officers who assisted with the organisation of the session completed a self-administered questionnaire.

2.1 Participants' survey

A structured questionnaire was developed which used three types of questions:

1. close-ended questions;
2. close-ended questions with the opportunity for comment;
3. open-ended questions.

Close-ended questions used tick box responses and Likert scales. Respondents were asked to report: their age and gender; their professional role and responsibilities; whether they travelled to participate in Bug Breakfast; whether Bug Breakfast helped them to do their job; their appraisal of the learning environment; the adequacy of the time allowed for questions; and their overall impression of the value of the session.

The questionnaires used at the live and remote sites differed in the questions used to examine the nature of the learning environments. At the live site, participants were asked about the layout of the room; while at the remote sites, participants were asked about the quality of the technical delivery of the session, such as the picture and sound. The live site participants were asked about the time allowed for questions. All other questions were common to both groups. A copy of each questionnaire is included in Appendices 8.2 and 8.3.

At the beginning of the July Bug Breakfast, the chair of the session, who was part of the evaluation team, introduced the evaluation and sought the cooperation of the participants. Participation was voluntary. The questionnaires were distributed and completed at the end of the session at all the sites.

The facilitators at the remote sites:

- counted the number of participants at their site;
- distributed the questionnaires;
- collected the completed questionnaires;
- returned the questionnaires to the investigators at North Sydney.

The responses to the participant questionnaires were entered into a database using Microsoft Access software and imported into SAS (version 8.02) for analysis.¹⁰ For the close-ended questions a quantitative analysis was undertaken for simple frequencies. The comments offered in response to the open questions underwent a qualitative analysis for the major themes expressed.

2.2 Facilitators' survey

The 10 facilitators were invited to participate in a focus group via videoconference at the end of the Bug Breakfast. For those facilitators unable to reconnect via videoconference, telephone interviews were conducted or the questions were supplied and responded to by email. Participation was voluntary.

The themes explored were: the time spent arranging the connection; difficulties experienced; perceived benefits for staff; and how the organisation of the session might be improved. A qualitative analysis was undertaken of the responses.

The questions used are presented in Box 1.

Box 1: Questions asked of facilitators

1. What are the major barriers or difficulties that you experience in connecting to Bug Breakfast?
2. How much time does it take to organise your participation in Bug Breakfast, including setting up the location?
3. Do you get any training to manage the videoconferencing?
4. What do you think are the benefits for staff in attending Bug Breakfast?
5. What aspects of the organisation from the North Sydney end work well for you?
6. Is there anything that you feel that we could do from the North Sydney end that would improve Bug Breakfast for you?
7. Are there any further comments that you would like to make?

2.3 Presenters' survey

All three speakers presented from the live site in North Sydney. As is customary, one of the presenters was a Trainee Public Health Officer who liaised with the two guest presenters. The Trainee Public Health Officer was briefed about the evaluation, and prior to the day had notified the guest speakers that an evaluation would take place at the end of the session and informed them of its purpose. He also clarified whether they had any concerns. The presenters were asked whether they would complete a separate survey by interview after the session, to which they agreed.

All three presenters were interviewed. Two of the interviews were conducted by telephone and one was a face-to-face interview.

The questions explored the presenters' perspective of videoconferencing the session. It sought their prior experience of the medium, their concerns, whether they had adapted their presentation style and lessons learnt.

The questions used are presented in Box 2. A qualitative analysis was undertaken of their responses.

Box 2: Questions asked of presenters

1. Prior to today, have you ever used videoconferencing facilities? If yes, in what situations have you used them (meetings, patient consultations, teaching etc)?
2. Did you have any concerns about using videoconferencing before you started?
3. Did you have to adapt your presentation style to accommodate videoconferencing? If yes, how and to what extent?
4. Would you do anything different, if you had to present by videoconferencing in the future?
5. Is there anything else you would like to make further comment on?

2.4 Organisers' survey

The five Trainee Public Health Officers who organised the Bug Breakfast completed an anonymous self-administered structured questionnaire at the end of the session. The purpose of the questionnaire was to explore whether assisting with the organisation and delivery of the session interfered with their learning experience. A qualitative analysis was undertaken of the responses. The organisers' survey is presented in Appendix 8.4.