

Virtual academic detailing is similar to in-person academic detailing for self-reported satisfaction and behavior changes.

Academic Detailing Defined

- Academic detailing (AD) is one-to-one or small group continuing education for prescribers
- Over 100 randomized AD trials since late 1970s
- Educational focus is evidence-based prescribing and non-pharmaceutical care options
- Conceptual model is a blend of motivational interviewing and social marketing
- AD visits, or educational sessions, traditionally occur in community prescribers' offices
- Goal is to facilitate prescriber adoption of "key messages" or evidence-based behavior changes

Vermont Academic Detailing Program

- Longest-running university-based AD program in the country, operational since 1999
- Target audience: VT primary care prescribers
- Funding support: State of Vermont; UVM Larner College of Medicine Office of Primary Care & AHEC Program
- Staffing: 2 physician and 3 pharmacist academic detailers plus administrative support
- Current topics: Management of Opioids, Fibromyalgia, Type 2 Diabetes, COPD, Cannabinoids

Educational Innovation

- In-person sessions suspended during the pandemic
- There are little data supporting a model of virtual AD
- In May 2020, AD transitioned to a virtual format, using Zoom software
- Virtual sessions were intended to maintain a similar format to in-person sessions
 - Sessions were between 30-60 minutes long
 - The same visual materials were used, except they were presented in PDF format rather than on paper
- Participants were asked to complete an evaluation survey following the session (collected in Redcap for virtual sessions versus on paper for in-person sessions)

The objective of this evaluation was to compare in-person to virtual visits, with a hypothesis of non-inferiority between formats.

Vermont Academic Detailing Program Sessions now available by Zoom!

Join our academic detailers from the convenience of your home, work, or other location. These interactive visits are intended to be efficient sessions between you and one of our academic detailers. Flexible scheduling options are available.

Multiple Topics to Choose From

- **NW7** Managing "Headline Stress" in the setting of COVID-19
- Cannabinoids
- Diabetes (newly updated)
- Management of Opioids (reviewing the VT rules)
- Advanced Management of Opioids
- Fibromyalgia

Easy and Convenient Scheduling

Contact Laurie McLean at Laurie.McLean@uvm.edu. We will consider early mornings or evenings in addition to lunchtime and traditional academic detailing hours.

Personalized, One-to-One Conversation

These sessions are specifically designed to be delivered between one clinician and one academic detailer. This keeps the conversation focused and efficient.

Continuing Education

All topics have CME credit available. The topics related to opioids and fibromyalgia are approved as controlled substances credit.

Example Promotional Flyer Emailed to Prescribers

Evaluation

- Survey data from virtual sessions delivered between May to October 2020 were compared to survey data for in-person sessions from May to October 2019
- Data were compared with a hypothesis of non-inferiority between formats using Fisher's exact tests

Results

Academic Detailing to Vermont Primary Care Prescribers

	May-Oct 2019 In-person	May-Oct 2020 Virtual
Sessions Delivered	61	98
Total Prescribers	274	265
Prescriber Evaluations	233 (85%)	88 (33%)

Comparison of In-person to Virtual Formats

Evaluation Question	May-Oct 2019 In-person		May-Oct 2020 Virtual		P
	N*	(%)	N*	(%)	
Would you be willing to attend a similar session in the future?	224/226	99.1	86/87	98.9	1.00
Do you feel the information presented will impact your practice/patient care?	214/217	98.6	87/88	98.9	1.00
Do you feel the information presented will impact your prescribing?	178/195	91.3	74/82	90.0	0.82

*The numerators indicate a "yes" response to the question.

Key Findings and Reflections

- A virtual AD format is non-inferior to an in-person format
- Although the number of prescribers who received detailing decreased slightly during 2020, the number of sessions increased. This demonstrates a shift towards more one-to-one sessions, which is the most evidence-based model of academic detailing.
- Teaching virtually required several adjustments:
 - Actively looking at the camera, rather than at the provider directly
 - Requesting all participants keep video on, to assist with reading body language
 - Starting all sessions face-to-face to establish a social connection, prior to screen-sharing materials
 - Establishing a back-up plan in case of technology failures

Advantages of a Virtual Format

- Easy to catch people up in a one-to-one session if they missed a small group session
- Less travel time for academic detailers
- Efficient and convenient for prescribers
- Potential for increased reach and capacity for more geographically distant practices

Limitations and challenges

- Low survey completion in virtual group (possible selection bias)
 - It is not known whether the low completion was due to the timing of survey administration, factors related to the format, lack of time by participants, or other factors. However several prescribers attended multiple sessions, strengthening the chances that prescribers are satisfied with the sessions but are not completing surveys for a different reason.
- Unable to access data on actual behavior changes as a result of the education in either format
- Limited qualitative data to evaluate preferences for in-person or virtual formats

Conclusions and Next Steps

- Virtual academic detailing is a feasible and acceptable format for delivering this style of continuing education
- Future efforts must address the low post-session evaluation rate in the virtual group
- It will be important to understand educational preferences to better plan for which formats to offer in a post-COVID environment