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**PREPAREDNESS ONLINE LEARNING: FACTORS AFFECTING COURSE
COMPLETION RATES**

Author (s)

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My internship took place at the Center for Public Health Preparedness (CPHP), University at Albany-SPH, Rensselaer, NY. The Center has been in operation since 2002. Using a number of methods, the Center provides emergency preparedness related training to enhance knowledge and skills development to local health department personnel and their partners. The focus of my internship was to evaluate the online courses and their effectiveness as a training method. My primary objective was to develop and conduct a descriptive survey study to explore factors affecting the online course completion rates. The intent of the survey was to assess perceived barriers, perceived benefits, individual, interpersonal, and organizational level influences on the course users' decisions. Additionally, the survey was designed to collect a broad range of information including the course users' opinions and experiences. The study was conducted by adapting the basic framework of a case control study design. The Center developed and launched multiple online courses between 2002 and 2008. I investigated the number of people who registered, completed, and did not complete 10 specific online courses. The registration and completion rates varied by time and by type of courses. The online course completion rates ranged from 36-60% across the 10 different courses. The data analysis compared responses between the registrants who completed the online course and those who did not. Upon completion, the findings of this study will be used by the Center in an effort to improve the effectiveness of the online courses as a training tool.