

Abstract Milano ICOH 2006

Case-based online learning for medical students - the German NetWoRM

Occupational Medicine (OM) is an obligatory subject in medical training in Germany. As training of practical aspects of occupational medicine in this field is difficult for most of the departments for OM we started implementing e-learning with a case-based approach in 1999. Several cases from didactically edited real patient histories were created and illustrated by multimedia material. In order to ensure a high quality of the e-learning tool each case is evaluated by two experts and user evaluated.

In the beginning, cases were implemented in supervised small group sessions. Since two terms, the cases can be used by the students via the internet at any time. Either training was rated high by the users. This opened the possibility to share cases with other universities via distance learning.

Overall, ten departments for OM are currently using the cases. In Bavaria, the cases have been implemented into the Virtual University of Bavaria (vhb) and can be used by all students at the five Bavarian medical schools. In addition, students from other Bavarian faculties interested in OM can obtain access.

In the summer term 2005 539 students worked on the cases via the vhb. Of these, 372 (69%) participated in the user evaluation. The results indicated that even users who never worked with case-based e-learning before did not face major technical difficulties with the e-learning tool and rated the use of the programme easy. Students liked cases focusing on occupational problems in the healthcare setting most. Nevertheless, social problems in OM were considered to open a new perspective of medicine.

In order to guarantee the sustainability of the programme a critical mass of participating institutions is crucial. In addition, new cases will be developed and implemented into postgraduate training as well as training on occupational health in high schools.

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