

Thursday 13th July - 1020-1040hrs - Ashstead 2

Low-Tech, High-Yield; the utility of virtual patients using simple presentation software

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Virtual patients are known to be valuable for teaching clinical reasoning, capitalising on accessibility, patient safety, and freedom to control case scenarios¹. Specialist software licences and training however, can be a barrier to their initiation and ongoing use².

We explore the impact of teaching with hyperlinked Microsoft PowerPoint presentations as virtual patients. This study investigates perceptions by both teachers and students, with attention paid to whether this tool can develop clinical reasoning skills.

Methods: This is a phenomenological qualitative study which seeks to gain a rich understanding of perceptions of this teaching method. Teaching fellows and students were familiarised with the tool, before participating in a teaching session, then taking part in follow-up focus group discussions. Undergraduate medical students and clinical teaching fellows were recruited to the study using non-probability, exploratory sampling.

This study was preceded by quantitative, quasi trials, using post-teaching questionnaires. These demonstrated promising utility and popularity of the tool.

Results: Analysis of data from the first phase of the study have revealed themes which will be further explored in a second phase. Its use has been acknowledged as a legitimate and safe way to develop clinical knowledge, reasoning skills, and decision making, in line with existing literature regarding virtual patients³. The simplicity of the software has not been a barrier to the face validity of the tool and there is demand for ongoing use.

This format can overcome potential barriers to use of virtual patients, and expand access to their use in medical education.

Reference(s): 1. Plackett R, Kassianos AP, Mylan S, Kambouri M, Raine R, Sheringham J. The effectiveness of using virtual patient educational tools to improve medical students' clinical reasoning skills: a systematic review. *BMC medical education*. 2022;22(1):1-8 |2. Posel N, Fleischer D, Shore BM. 12 Tips: Guidelines for authoring virtual patient cases. *Medical teacher*. 2009;31(8):701-8 |3. Posel N, Mcgee JB, Fleischer DM. Twelve tips to support the development of clinical reasoning skills using virtual patient cases. *Medical teacher*. 2015;37(9):813-8.

Keywords: Virtual patients, Medical education, Clinical reasoning, TEL