Correspondence

(The Editors do not hold themselves responsible for opinions expressed by correspondents)

Letter to the editor: The electronic learning habits of radiology trainees in London and South East England.

The Editor,

An extensive variety of learning resources are available to current radiology trainees [1, 2] and in addition to traditional books and journals there now exists a wide range of electronic resources to promote further clinical education [1, 2]. Use of electronic and internet applications have increased greatly over recent years and now provide a valuable information resource for radiologists in training. Online resources include websites such as Aunt Minnie, emedicine/Medscape, RSNA online and Imaging consult, as well as more exam focused subscription multiple choice question website such as PasTest and OnExamination. Online books and journals are now available and the Royal College also provides its own Radiology Integrated Training Initiative resource.

We designed and distributed an anonymous online questionnaire to all London, Kent, Surrey and Sussex radiology trainees to examine the use of various online/electronic learning resources, including use of Radiology Integrated Training Initiative, for radiology trainees versus more traditional learning methods. We also set out to assess access to information technology (IT) resources within the Deanery.

We received 136 complete responses from a total of 302 trainees (an overall response rate of 45%). 18% of respondents were preparing for FRCP Part 1, 28% for Part 2A, 22% for Part 2B and 32% had completed their exams.

Despite such a wide range of electronic resources being available the single most popular learning format remained the traditional book (42), followed by Radiology Integrated Training Initiative online (24), paper journals

(20) and electronic journals (14). Less popular resources included Emedicine (6), Aunt Minnie Online (6), RSNA Online (6), Online MCQ sites (6) and electronic books (4) (Figure 1).

Regarding online resources 39% of trainees used Emedicine/ Medscape weekly and 34% on a monthly basis. Only 18% had ever used Imaging Consult and two-thirds of these hardly ever used this resource. 75% had used Aunt Minnie online, with 51% using this resource monthly or more frequently. 66% had used RSNA online, with 43% using this monthly or more frequently. 46% had never used online MCQ resources (e.g. PasTest and OnExamination) and 38% had prepared for exams using MCQs passed on from other trainees. 64% used electronic books.

76% of respondents felt easier access to electronic journals would encourage online learning. 76 answered that less restrictive IT policies at their institution would encourage use of online resources. 66 felt that more time should be dedicated to online learning and 76 believed there should be more computers.

Interestingly our data correlates with that of Rowell et al [1] who reported in their cohort of respondents that for reading journal articles, 67% prefer hard copy. They noted that the results of their survey indicated that, despite an increase in internet use and the perception that web based information is reliable, most radiologists still prefer traditional resources for radiological information and radiology education [1].

This is consistent with the London/KSS respondents who despite demonstrating use of a wide range of electronic and online learning resources, traditional methods, such as paper books remained the most popular.

Yours etc.,

C J BURKE, MBChB,
R H THOMAS, MRCP, FRCP,
D FASCIA, MRCS,
D HOWLETT, FRCP AND
S HEENAN, FRCP

E-mail: drchristopherburke@hotmail.com

(Received 24 June 2011, Accepted 4 July 2011)

DOI: 10.1259/bjr/29853241

Figure 1. Single most preferred resource among respondents.

References

1. Rowell MR, Johnson PT, Fishman EK. Radiology Education in 2005: World Wide Web Practice Patterns, Perceptions, and Preferences of Radiologists. *Radiographics* 2007;R27:563–571.
2. Flanders AE. What Is the Future of Electronic Learning in Radiology? *Radiographics* 2007;27:559–561.