E-Learning Materials are not yet Subject to Peer Review

Tülay Özkan Seyhan, Mukadder Orhan Sungur

Department of Anaesthesiology and Reanimation, İstanbul University İstanbul Faculty of Medicine, İstanbul, Turkey

Dear Editor,

We have read the review entitled “Anaesthesiology and e-learning” (1), which has been published in your journal, with great interest. Education materials in electronic media are distributed in a wide spectrum ranging from texts to interactive education. Types of e-learning such as simulation, e-class, and e-conference allow interaction and active involvement. Positive aspect of web-based education for the trainer includes easy implementation of changes or updates in electronic media, whereas the negative aspect includes necessity of long preparation period and technological support (2). Positive aspect for the learner includes the fact that it promotes education and provides opportunity for the learner to realize and fill the gaps. The most important issue is the assessment of appropriateness of e-learning material before use by means of peer reviewing in three categories (scientific content, eligibility for teaching/learning, ease of use), which are the minimum standards (3, 4). In Turkey, professional organizations are recently interested in e-learning for continuing medical education. Continuing Medical Education-Continuing Professional Development Accreditation-Credit Designation Council of the Turkish Medical Association is currently working on the accreditation of e-learning. However, besides this, there is yet no peer review in Turkey, similar to that implemented for medical papers, in accordance with the standards recommended for e-learning. This brings the value of e-learning into disrepute.

We are utilizing e-learning in our anaesthesiology residency training program for six years (5). For this purpose, we use Moodle (modular object-oriented dynamic learning environment) software among open-source code softwares because of availability of its Turkish translation (6). This software allows creation of not only lesson modules, calendar, dictionary, and case archive, but also many sections such as questionnaire, discussion platform, homework, and tests, which the users can share ideas, ask questions, and assess their knowledge and are supported with visual materials. It also enables detailed inventory and statistical analysis of duration of benefiting from lessons, homework, and tests in order to provide feedback for trainers and allows archiving. The system has been structured in the way that our students could benefit throughout their residency and is open only to the registered users excluding a sample section (laparoscopic surgery). Since the education material has not been peer reviewed, it is not open for general use. We believe that filling the gap in this area in the shortest time under the leadership of Turkish Society of Anaesthesiology and Reanimation would enhance Turkish e-learning sources and make substantial contribution to education.

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