

Utility of Tele-Education in Plastic Surgery

Chittoria R.K.*, Senthil Kumaran M.**, Pandey S.**, Friji M.T.***, Mohapatra D.P.***, Dinesh Kumar S.***

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Abstract

Telemedicine includes the use of information and communication technology for education in the health sector, tele-education. Tele-education can be defined as "education in which students receive instruction over the Internet, from a video, etc., instead of going to school." Also known as E-learning, it comprises all forms of electronically supported learning and teaching. Content is delivered via the Internet, intranet/extranet, audio or video tape, satellite TV, and CD-ROM. It can be self-paced or instructor-led and includes media in the form of text, image, animation, streaming video and audio. Tele-education has the potential to provide access to education both formal and continuing medical education. We present our experience of tele education in a tertiary healthcare.

Keywords: Tele Medicine; Tele Education; Video Conferencing.

Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines telemedicine (TM) as, "The delivery of health care services, where distance is a critical factor, by all health care professionals using information and

communication technologies for the exchange of valid information for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease and injuries, research and evaluation, and for the continuing education of health care providers, all in the interests of advancing the health of individuals and their communities [1,2]".

Medical education is considered a very significant strategy in ensuring the quality of health protection. It represents the most dynamic structural element of good quality of protection.

Medical education and training is not good unless the student acquired the nucleus or the minimum knowledge (cognitive aspect), the minimum of required skills (psychological/motoric aspect) and minimum of obligatory conduct values (affective aspect).

Tele education promotes permanent learning, students can improve themselves professionally and independently, at their own tempo, at place and time that they choose by themselves, they can choose great deal of subjects which offer different institutions, teachers-individuals; students go through materials for learning by speed of their own and as many times as they want. The place can be chosen - it depends on media which is used for learning material (they can learn at work or from home) [3].

Methods

This study was conducted in Department of Plastic Surgery, JIPMER, Puducherry from August 2014 to February 2016. The educational programme scheduled was live recorded using camera and the live audiovisual feeds were displayed on the projection screen displayed in the lecture hall. The live feeds were also being telecasted with the aid of

Author's Affiliation: *Additional Professor & Head, **Senior Resident, ***Associate Professor, Department of Plastic Surgery, Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) Pondicherry India-605006.

Reprint Request: Senthil Kumaran M., Senior Resident, Department of Plastic Surgery, Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) Pondicherry India-605006.

E-mail: drchittoria@yahoo.com

high definition video conferencing software (Vidyo) across synchronized medical colleges across the nation (Figure 1, 2). Nevertheless for the benefit of students the presentation was also made accessible through Ustream for live streaming. All the lectures, seminars, awareness programs and CME (Figure 3) were telecasted in all medical colleges of South India and outside South India. Active participation was noticed between presenter and audiences in for of suggestions and questions. The efficacy and utility of each program was determined through feedback from audience at the end of the program.

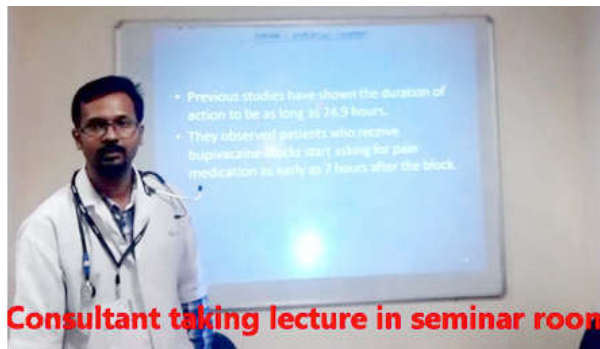


Fig. 1: Consultant taking lecture, being telecasted by live video conference

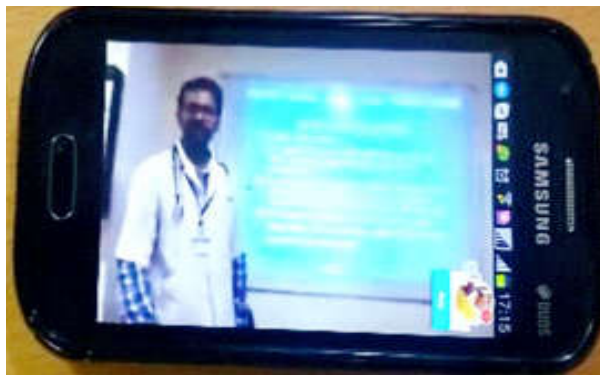


Fig. 2: Students of remote area attending the lecture



Fig. 3: CME being conducted and telecasted

Results

We found the method to be useful in the following ways:

- Efficient
- Cost effective
- User friendly
- Easily accessible technology
- Catering a large audience

Discussion

Tele education can be defined as a form of education which is in process permanently, or most of the time, all or most of the tasks of teaching and learning separately during the time and space between teacher and student. Organizational and pedagogical improvements have fundamental importance. It is in use both interaction teacher – student and interaction student – student. Phases of synchronized and asynchronous learning are combined. Individual and group works are also combined. If all these forms are involved in educational process, they mutually support each other, as a last resort. Traditional education as well as contemporary education is supplemented by informatics technologies in unique system of flexible education. In order to use advantages of flexible education, it is useful to combine various forms of learning, during the preparation phase and development of every educational course in appropriate way. Few of the main benefits of tele education include the economical factor; a student has 24 hour access to needed information; he/she is given the opportunity to learn the subject in his/hers own time and speed; he/she can access learning materials independently of a place or time; he/she is given the opportunity to learn how to work independently; using e-mail or chat rooms he/she is able to contact a professor or his/hers assistant if there are any questions or confusions regarding lectures [4,5].

Conclusion

Tele education can be considered as a useful tool in teaching, connecting and promoting medical education in a larger scale in a simple and cost effective manner.

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