

Wainwright K*, Wassall RD*, Pierce S**

Background: problems facing anaesthetic trainees in pain training

Like many specialties¹ pain services have been significantly affected by the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, and have seen substantial reductions in clinic space and theatre time as, like others, we move towards virtual and telephone appointments². Pain medicine is an integral part of the anaesthetic curriculum, but with redeployment and reduced service provision, the opportunities to complete this aspect of training are reduced.

To facilitate pain training in these unprecedented times, here we describe the development of an All Wales virtual platform to make online pain medicine more interactive, life-like, useful, and above all, fun!

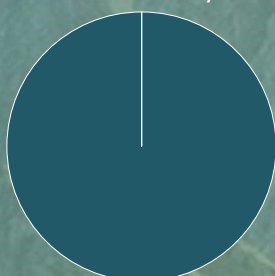
Methods: how to create a “virtual patient experience”

Fictional patient interactions, based on the intermediate pain training curriculum, were created in Twine, an open-source tool for creating interactive, nonlinear stories (freely available at www.twinery.org). Each case was extensively developed using current guidelines, experienced MDT clinicians' knowledge, and real patient stories. Willing volunteers acted as patients and clinicians for audio recordings and photographs of consultations and clinical meetings. Each narrative was created with multiple decision points where learners could develop the case by choosing from different options. After graphic design input, the final product was shared with pain trainers throughout Wales. After their consideration the first module on back pain was hosted on a bespoke website and made freely available to trainees as part of a proof of concept pilot. Following launch in August 2020 two further modules on 'the acute pain round' and 'management of CRPS' have been published. Learners feedback was collected in a short survey of five questions at the end of the module. The site includes an integrated audit function on usage.

Results of pilot modules

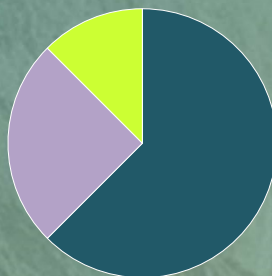
Site statistics show that 266, 688 and 234 distinct hosts were served for September, October and November respectively. Access to module 1 has been requested 69 times while access to modules 2 and 3 have been requested 124 and 167 times respectively which is likely to reflect repeated access due to the latter modules having more content.

Did the site work for you?



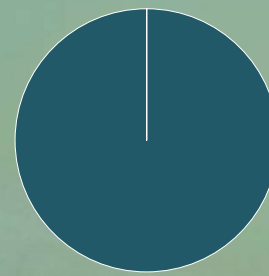
Yes No

Did you learn something?



Yes, lots Yes, some Yes, a little No

Do you want to do more modules?



Yes, & they are about right Yes, but longer Yes, but shorter No

Learners feedback:

“Like the extra info options (e.g. link to NICE guidelines) - saves time when the information is easily accessed”

“Clear and educational. Fun format and good links to useful information”

“Enjoyed being able to go back and select different options to see different outcomes”

“It looks like an incredibly large piece of work that has been very well executed; I am impressed”

“More topics please! Pain pathways would be good for Primary as well as CRPS”

“Really well put together and a great idea”

Discussion: where do we go from here?

After the initial positive feedback from trainers and trainees, the website has been released into the public domain through the Welsh School of Anaesthesia and shared across the UK by the Faculty of Pain Medicine. Further modules are in development to cover other aspects of the syllabus following requests from trainees. The website is freely available internationally, and we hope it will contribute to the education of healthcare professionals in developing countries. We believe this is a really exciting and innovative platform that will complement existing training opportunities.

Summary

Virtual online training through www.virtualanaesthetics.com engages trainees and allows them to make clinical decisions without clinical risk. This innovative format is fun, appealing to learners and this model could be of interest to other specialties in the future.



www.virtualanaesthetics.com

References

- Pal S et al. (2020). Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on training. *AAGBI Anaesthesia News*. Accessed 10/11/20. <https://anaesthetists.org/Home/Resources-publications/COVID-19-guidance/Mitigating-the-impact-of-COVID-19-on-training>
- Eccleston C et al. (2020). Managing patients with chronic pain during the COVID-19 outbreak: considerations for the rapid introduction of remotely supported (eHealth) pain management services. *Pain*. 161(5): 889–893