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First experiences with creating a virtual patient in midwifery

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Introduction: In the paper we present the first experiences with the creation of virtual patients for the needs of the study program of midwifery. Virtual Patient (VP) is an interactive computer simulation of a real clinical case for health education. The student, or the case solver, plays the role of a health care professional, who has a medical history, performs physical examination and makes diagnostic or therapeutic decisions. The case usually begins with a description of the situation, the clinical or the domestic environment of the patient / client's case study. Then follows the selection of steps to get more information, a clinical decision making that contains a variety of options - right, neutral, incorrect and can improves (exacerbates) the condition of the patient. Feedback is part of VP. It is important for a virtual patient to meet predetermined educational goals.

Methodology: VPs are created by of several tools, virtual environments or platforms. The choice of the environment depends on several factors and the availability of the environment is a determining element. In this view, we opted for the Open Labyrinth (OL) platform, an open-source, web-based VP system - a freely accessible system that enables users to create interactive educational activities, including virtual patients. The OL platform is designed for simple and intuitive use, whether it's creating or playing VPs. The basic structure of the virtual patient in the OL consists of nodes and interconnections. One node corresponds to one web page, and the link provides interconnection between nodes. We have tried to adhere to the general principles of VP, for example the consistent choice of case that has the goal, to draw from real cases in practice, to consider educational objectives, to unnecessarily complicate the case, to let students thinking, to explain individual solutions, to describe a place, person, action or emotion.

Conclusion: Overall, we have created six original virtual patients that increase the attractiveness and efficiency of the learning process. Cases focus on midwifery care in selected situations in preterm birth, perinatal loss, gestational diabetes, ineffective breastfeeding, postpartal bleeding, and sudden home-birth. After creating the content, the VPs were inserted into the virtual environment and tested by the students directly in the learning process. Subsequently, peer reviewers reviewed them. They are currently published and freely accessible on the JLF UK academic portal http://www.jfmed.uniba.sk/pracoviska/ucelove-pracoviska/simulacne-vyucbove centrum/virtualni-pacienti/ as well as on the international portal http://demo.openlabyrinth.ca/.

Biography

Eva Urbanová has completed his PhD in Nursing at Comenius University in Bratislava, Slovakia in 2004. She currently works as an Assistant in the Department of Midwifery. She is interested in modernizing teaching in midwifery, ethics and primary care in midwifery. She is involved with virtual patients. She is the author of two textbooks in the field of Midwifery and co-author of other textbooks for Midwifery and Nursing. She publishes in the field of Midwifery and Nursing. It has 97 different publishing outputs at home and abroad.

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