

Navigating the vast seas of information

A new ICGP module has been developed to assist GPs in finding and evaluating best evidence-based research online, writes **Trish Patton**

MEDICINE IS A CONTINUALLY EVOLVING PRACTICE and thus the ability to keep up-to-date and current is paramount. Scholarship, one of the 'Eight Domains of Good Professional Practice' from the Medical Council of Ireland, involves lifelong learning based on the best information and evidence to guide professional practice. Since March 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all medical education has moved online with e-learning now the major mode of delivery for ICGP education.

A key part of the role of the librarians is to provide information skills training with the aim of encouraging independent, information-literate, lifelong learners. *Information skills for GPs: the five steps to success*, an e-learning module, has been introduced to empower GPs to undertake independent study, develop proficiency in information skills and foster lifelong learning. The introduction of this web-based, self-paced module also offers greater flexibility and convenience to each individual GP, enables us to reach more GPs and complements face-to-face training sessions.

A small group of end-user GPs collaborated in the creation of the module, providing feedback throughout the process to ensure a quality resource was produced for the target audience. The group provided valuable feedback on each of the six draft videos with their suggestions for areas of improvement incorporated into the final e-learning module. A key finding from the literature review and the feedback from the GPs was the importance of segmenting the module and keeping the videos short.

Feedback on the e-learning module was very positive with GPs commenting that they would recommend the module to others.

The e-learning module

The purpose of the e-learning module is to empower GPs to find, use and locate evidence-based information through reviewing the steps to success needed for evidence-based practice. This includes how to formulate a good research question, how to search effectively and efficiently and how to critically appraise the literature. The module comprises 10 short educational videos, eight handouts, and assessment via 10 online MCQs. A short introductory video provides an overview. The module is structured as a simple, linear, easy-to-follow five-step programme with each section covering a particular information topic:

- Step 1. Getting the most out of the ICGP Library: Provides an overview of the ICGP Library and Information Service, its services and resources available and how to search the ICGP Library Catalogue
- Step 2. Finding what you need from the ICGP online journals: A step-by-step guide to accessing the online journals available to ICGP members via the Full Text Finder Portal

- Step 3. Searching using PubMed: Introduces useful tips for planning your search and a step-by-step example using the PubMed database
- Step 4. An introduction to EBM: A brief introduction to Evidence-Based Medicine and the EBM tools including the TRIP database, PubMed Clinical Queries and BMJ Best Practice
- Step 5. Referencing and locating sources: A brief introduction to referencing and how to reference using the Vancouver Referencing System.

The module is currently available to all ICGP members and trainees with access through ICGP Education, the ICGP's Moodle learning management system. You can log-in with your name and password at www.icgpeducation.ie


Future possibilities

The future holds many possibilities for further development and evaluation of the module. This e-learning module was developed as a stand-alone, accredited e-learning module for GPs for self-directed learning and professional development purposes. Our intention for the information skills e-learning module is to help GPs to be self-sufficient searchers, confident in their own abilities, independent in their study, and ultimately to be information-literate. That is, to be able to find, use and evaluate evidence-based information.

The module can also be expanded to be used as a teaching tool to complement instruction by the librarians and GP educators integrated into either a remote or blended learning approach using the flipped classroom technique.

Blended learning, the preferred approach for health-care professionals, is a method of teaching that combines e-learning technology with traditional instructor-led training. The flipped classroom, defined as an approach in which core teaching is delivered using online material viewed prior to face-to-face learning, should leave more class time to engage in practical exercises and discussion, thus making for a more interactive and engaging experience.

For any GP educators interested in collaborating on future information skills sessions, we would be happy to discuss requirements. Contact us at Email: library@icgp.ie

It is hoped that the module will be of assistance to all ICGP members, CME tutors, GP trainers/trainees as well as those engaging in e-learning activities and research. 

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