

Sorting through a world of information



The ICGP library and information service is now offering an online information skills module to help GPs retrieve relevant information from the internet

THE BUTTIMER REPORT STATES: “Doctors require an ongoing programme of information skills training if they are to achieve self-sufficiency and confidence in retrieving the information necessary for evidence-based practice”.¹

With information more accessible through the internet and the exponential growth in the amount of information available, it is more important than ever to be able to find, use and evaluate this information, ie. become information-literate. With this in mind, the ICGP library and information service has launched an online information skills module for GPs. This module is an introduction to the lifelong information skills necessary for all GPs to help in daily clinical practice and to assist in maintaining professional competence.

Development of the module

ICGP education is currently developing a range of stand-alone e-learning modules. Each module will focus on key clinical areas, providing the very latest clinical guidelines and a number of related educational resources.

The ICGP library and information service delivers information skills training sessions to eLearning participants, GP trainees and other GP members. In the past, this has been delivered either through group presentations or by individual appointment. The ICGP librarians, Gillian Doran and Trish Patton, have worked with Nick Fenlon, director of ICGP education, Aisling Lavelle (clinical MedEd) and David McLean (CPD sessions) to develop this online module.

This new online format will ensure that the module is available 24/7 and at point of need in order to be more accessible and reach more GPs. The key features of the information skills module are that:

- It is free to all ICGP members
- It qualifies for two external professional competence credits
- It is done by full distance learning
- It is easy to register for
- It can be completed in sessions.

Reasons to complete the module

The aim of this information skills module is to provide an overview of the ICGP library and information service and give you the tools to improve your own searching skills by providing clear and simple instructions on accessing and searching online resources such as search engines and databases independently, and on evaluating and managing the information retrieved.

To help you with professional competence

On completion of this information skills module (ie. lessons and MCQ), you will qualify for two external professional competence credits.

To assist you in retrieving suitable answers to clinical questions

Survey research suggests that GPs have up to one clinical question per patient; however, they pursue only one-third of these and do guesswork on 70-80% of their information



How to register for the information skills module

In order to register, please follow the steps below:

- Step 1: Visit www.icgp-education.ie/information_skills
- Step 2: Click 'login' and you will see the option to either 'create new account' or if you already registered you can enter your username and password and login and then proceed to Step 5
- Step 3: If you are creating a new account, then you need to enter the following required information: name, email address, location, Medical Council number. For security and verification reasons, an email will be sent to you
- Step 4. Click on the link in the email
- Step 5. Click on the 'modules' tab and locate the information skills module. Click on this
- Step 6. You will be required to enter an 'enrolment key'. The enrolment key is for security reasons and will be required only once.
Enrolment key: ICGP-lib-001

You can now access the full course. From now on, you will only need to enter your personal username and password to log in and access the course. For enrolment support, please contact info@cpdsession.com

Note: This e-learning programme has been supported through an unrestricted educational grant from Novartis Pharmaceuticals Ireland

needs.² By defining precisely the clinical question and then searching and critically appraising current information, the doctor will be armed with the best evidence that he or she can then use to make a clinical decision.³

This information skills module aims to provide you with the necessary confidence and know-how to ensure you find evidence-based information. It will also be helpful when seeking guidelines/standards upon which to base your clinical audit required for professional competence.

To help you keep up to date

Sackett found some 20 years ago that to keep up to date with internal medicine it was necessary to read 17 articles a day, 365 days a year.⁴ This information skills module includes tips and resources to help you keep up to date.

To provide you with lifelong information retrieval skills

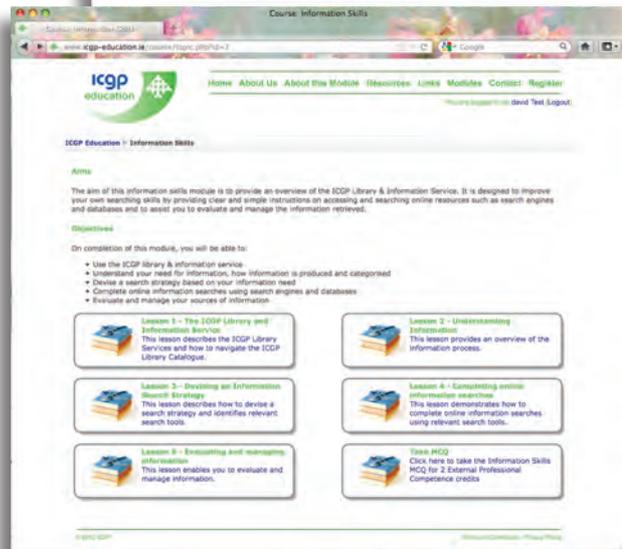
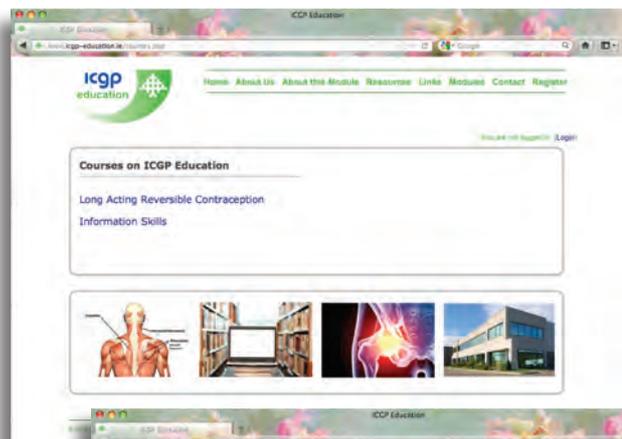
Clinical governance demands that all those involved in healthcare commit themselves to lifelong learning in order to keep up to date with the evidence that informs and supports clinical practice.¹ Outcome 20 of the ICGP Core Curriculum is to: "demonstrate effective use of web-based information systems in patient care and the ability to search the internet for medical and scientific information".⁵

Completing this module will provide the foundation for lifelong learning. We hope this information skills module will be of benefit to all GPs whether they are in practice, undertaking further education or are in training.

Overview of the module

The e-learning module is divided into five lessons including:

- Lesson 1: The ICGP library and information service
- Lesson 2: Understanding information
- Lesson 3: Devising an information search strategy
- Lesson 4: Completing online information searches



Lesson 5: Evaluating and managing information

Each lesson is supported by video lessons and additional resources. There is an MCQ assessment that will provide evidence of participation and on completion will enable a completion certificate to be printed for your professional competence portfolio. 

Trish Patton and Gillian Doran, ICGP librarians

References

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2. O'Brien C. Evidence-base for improving patient care. *Forum*, 2008; 25(4): 22-24
3. Shaughnessy AF, Slawson DC. Are we providing doctors with the training and tools for lifelong learning? *BMJ* 1999; 319: 1280
4. Smith, R. Strategies for coping with information overload. *BMJ* 2010; 341:c7126
5. ICGP Curriculum Development Committee (2008). ICGP Interactive Core Curriculum