



Acceptance, use and effects of PDF e-books in a course on basic pharmacology

To cite this article: (2012) Acceptance, use and effects of PDF e-books in a course on basic pharmacology, Medical Teacher, 34:2, 177-177, DOI: [10.3109/0142159X.2012.644839](https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2012.644839)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2012.644839>



Published online: 30 Jan 2012.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



Article views: 616



View related articles [↗](#)

important need. We recommend that health systems teaching is included in the undergraduate medical curriculum in order to prepare newly qualified physicians to find their place in shaping, leading and improving health services in the future.

Amer Ahmad Sharif and Iain Blair, Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, United Arab Emirates University, PO Box 17666, Al Ain, United Arab Emirates. E-mail: amer.sharif@uaeu.ac.ae; iain_blair@uaeu.ac.ae

References

- Berwick DM, Finkelstein JA. 2010. Preparing medical students for the continual improvement of health and health care: Abraham Flexner and the new "public interest". *Acad Med* 85(9 Suppl):S56–S65.
- Patel MS, Lypson ML, Davis MM. 2009. Medical student perceptions of education in health care systems. *Acad Med* 84(9):1301–1306.

Acceptance, use and effects of PDF e-books in a course on basic pharmacology

Dear Sir

Though being rather expensive, offering textbooks as online available PDF copies ("PDF e-books") has increased. In a prospective, cluster-randomised trial with 269 medical students attending our course on basic medical pharmacology in 2007 and 2008 we tested for acceptance and use of PDF e-books, attitudes towards e-learning and results in a final written exam.

Half of our students were assigned to use the PDF e-books ("users") as an add-on to our pharmacology teaching while the others were asked to do not ("non-users"). PDF e-book use obviously was affiliated to the course but low (median: <1h/week). Time spent on print-media was significantly higher (≥ 3 h/week). Compared to non-users, time spent on print-media was similar (during the course) or even higher (period between end of course and final exam). Attitudes towards e-learning obtained by a previously validated questionnaire did not differ between users and non-users and did not change during the study. Test results obtained by users in the final written exam (40 multiple-choice questions) tended to be higher (median 31 vs. 30 correct answers, $p < 0.08$, calculated effect size 0.27). Interestingly, the online offer obviously affected local sales figures of the printed pharmacology textbook that has been available online: while 3.4 books per month were sold during the online offer, sales figures were only 1.1/month before and after offering this book online as a PDF. No effects on sales figures were seen with comparable pharmacology textbooks that were not available online. Thus, students might have used the online offer as a kind of decision support to gain help with their choice which print-copy of a textbook to buy.

In summary, our study on an additional online offer of medical textbooks as PDF e-books does not reveal a substantial use albeit connected to a particular course. General attitude towards Computer-based Learning was not affected. Students assigned to use our PDF e-book offer spent more time on learning in total what might have caused a marginal, yet non-significant benefit regarding a final written multiple-choice exam. Since it is rather expensive to offer access to this simple kind of e-learning and the publisher otherwise might profit by boosted sales figures of his (print) products, it seems unlikely that for libraries or universities this expenditure is worth being made.

Jan Matthes and Stefan Herzig, Department of Pharmacology, University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany. E-mail: jan.matthes@uni-koeln.de

Elisabeth Müller, German National Library of Medicine ZB MED, Cologne, Germany, Christoph Stosch, Dean's Office for Student Affairs, Medical Faculty, University of Cologne, Cologne, Germany

Student-led interprofessional workshop for patient safety and quality improvement

Dear Sir

Patient safety and quality improvement (PSQI) are becoming increasingly important in modern healthcare. However, PSQI is not well integrated into the medical school curriculum and there is little opportunity in their training for students to engage in PSQI projects with the multidisciplinary team.

The Institute of Healthcare Improvement (IHI) Open School is a global network of student-led interprofessional societies aiming to educate students in PSQI (Pracilio 2009). This organisation facilitates students in running their own PSQI projects, who in turn, can directly engage in the multidisciplinary team, motivate peer group collaboration and gain leadership experience.

In February 2011, our IHI Open School University of Cambridge Chapter organised a student-led PSQI interprofessional workshop that aimed to motivate a culture of student-led proactive change, educate peers in PSQI principles and equip them with the skills to run their own PSQI projects.

This two-hour workshop comprised an introduction of PSQI principles, filmed reconstructions of adverse clinical incidents followed by interactive discussion in which participants identified areas where patient safety was compromised, small group discussion to brainstorm ideas for improvement projects and their implementation using the Plan, Do, Study, Act (PDSA) cycle (Cleghorn & Headrick 1996) and finally, presentations from each group to feedback on their respective improvement projects.