

Understanding Knowledge, Skills and Competency Needs in Digital Health for Current and Future Health Workforce

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Abstract : Background: Digital health education and training (DHET) is imperative for preparing current and future clinicians to work competently in digitally enabled environments. Despite rapid integration of digital health in modern health services, systematic education and training opportunities for health workers is still lacking. Objectives: This study aimed to investigate healthcare professionals' perspectives and expectations regarding the knowledge, skills and competency needs in digital health for current and future healthcare workforce. Methods: A qualitative study design with semi-structured individual interviews was employed. A purposive sample method was adopted to collect relevant information from the health workers. Inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim. Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) was followed when we reported this study. Results: Two themes emerged while analysing the data: (1) what to teach in DHET and (2) how to teach DHET. Overall, healthcare professionals agreed that DHET is important for preparing current and future clinicians for working competently in digitally enabled environments. Knowledge relating to what is digital health, types of digital health, use of technology and human factors in digital health were considered as important to be taught in DHET. Skills relating to digital health consultations, clinical information system management and remote monitoring were considered important to be taught. Blended learning which combined e-learning and classroom-based teaching, simulation sessions and clinical rotations were suggested by healthcare professionals as optimal approaches to deliver the above-mentioned content. Conclusions: This study is the first of its kind to investigate health professionals' perspectives and expectations relating to the knowledge, skills and competency needs in digital health for current and future healthcare workforce. Healthcare workers are keen to acquire relevant knowledge, skills and competencies related to digital health. Different modes of education delivery is of interest to fit in with busy schedule of health workers.

Keywords : digital health, telehealth, telemedicine, education, curriculum

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