

A Report on the Elearning Programme of the Irish College of General Practitioners Which Can Address Continuing Education Needs of Primary Care Physicians

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Abstract : Background: The case for continuing professional development has been well made, and was formalized in Ireland in recent years through the enactment of the Medical Practitioner's Act, which requires registered medical practitioners to complete a minimum of 50 hours CPD each year. The ICGP, who have been providing CPD opportunities to its members for many years, have responded to this need by developing a series of evidence-based, high-quality, multimedia modules across a range of clinical and non-clinical areas. (More traditional education opportunities are still being provided by the college also). Overview of Programme: The first module was released in September 2011, since when the eLearning program has grown steadily, and there are currently almost 20 modules available, with a further 5 in production. Each module contains three to six 10-minute video lessons, which use a combination of graphics, images, text, voice-over and clinical clips. These are supported by supplementary videos of expert pieces-to-camera, Q&As with content experts, clinical scenarios, external links and relevant documentation and other resources. Successful completion of MCQs will result in a Certificate of Completion, which can be printed or stored in Professional Competence portfolio. The Medical Practitioner's Act requires doctors to gather CPD credits across 8 domains of practice, and various eLearning modules have been developed to address each. For instance, modules with a strong clinical content would include Management of Hypertension, Management of COPD, and Management of Asthma. Other modules focus on health promotion such as Promoting Smoking Cessation, Promoting Physical Activity, and Addressing Childhood Obesity. Modules where communication skills are keys include modules on Suicide Prevention and Management of Depression. Other modules, currently in development include non-clinical topics around risk management, including Confidentiality, Consent etc. Each module is developed by a core group, which includes where possible, a GP with a special interest in the area, and a content expert(s). The college works closely with a medical education consultant and a production company in developing and producing the modules. Modules can be accessed (with password) through the ICGP website and are available free to all ICGP members. Summary of Evaluation: There are over 1700 registered users to date (over 55% of College membership). The program was evaluated using an online survey in 2013 (N = 144/950 - 12%) and results were very positive overall but provided material for the further improvement of the program also. Future Plans: While knowledge can be imparted well through eLearning, skills and attitudes are more difficult to influence through an online environment. The college is now developing a series of linked workshops, which will lead to ICGP Professional Competence Awards. The first pilot workshop is scheduled for February 2015 and is Cardiology-themed. Participants will be required to complete the following 4 modules in advance of attending - Management of Hypertension, Management of Heart Failure, Promoting Smoking Cessation, and Promoting Physical Activity. The workshop will be case-based and interactive, addressing ECG Interpretation in General Practice. Conclusions: The ICGP have responded to members needs for high-quality evidence-based education delivered in a way that suits GPs.

Keywords : CPD opportunities, evidence-based, high quality, multimedia modules across a range of clinical and non-clinical areas, medical practitioner's act

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