



VIRTUAL PATIENT IN MIDWIFERY

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D2.3 SERIOUS GAMES, SIMULATION AND MODELS FOR MEDICAL EDUCATION

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Virtual patient is an interactive computer simulation of real clinical case for the purpose of medical and health education, dedicated to the area of assessment and decision training. Electronic virtual patients are becoming increasingly popular and important in modern medical education. Their content, interactive clinical cases, created mainly by doctors and other healthcare specialists. The number of virtual patients available in obstetrics and midwifery is very low. There are several open platforms — players and development environments available currently. Web portal virtualpatients.eu offers series of midwifery / obstetrics virtual patients, running on Decision Simulation platform (e.g. premature labour). These virtual patients can be translated and accommodated to local needs. Few focused applications designed by specialized institutions and interest groups are also accessible (e.g. Can you be a midwife? by Ardea Arts). Commercially available are e.g. 8 obstetrics cases developed by Anesoft.

The aim of this paper is presentation of project to create own virtual patients appropriate for midwifery study programme.

In terms of methodology, a virtual patient in midwifery is an interactive computer simulation of real clinical case, in which the use of information and communication technologies with traditional face to face training is combined. The suitable, freely accessible platform for creating virtual patients is chosen in the first step and it is implemented in the workplace (in cooperation with ICT experts). Content of a clinical case is formed by experts in midwifery/obstetrics in the next phase. Partially the virtual patients for midwifery education will be based also on suitable existing cases available on virtualpatients.eu, as the international cooperation is being established.

Virtual patients can be used directly in contact teaching (teacher interpretation issues), as well as for individual study purposes. Students can solve the case, which they in practice rarely face (such as care for a women with perinatal loss, etc.), or vice versa routine clinical cases, where there are frequent errors in patient treatment. Developed virtual patients are planned to be shared within the Medical Faculties Network.

In Slovak academic field it is a fundamentally innovative didactic approach to create own custom-made virtual patients in general, especially in midwifery. Virtual patient helps to associate theoretical knowledge with the real applications in clinical practice. The benefit of virtual patients is significant for different reasons. Partially it is a compensation for the decreasing number of hospitalized patients and shortening of hospitalization time. It also improves the habits and skills of students and increases patient safety.

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