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Virtual Patient: An Interactive Simulator of Clinical Training in Chinese Medicine

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Abstract

Clinical skills training is crucial in Chinese Medicine education. This project makes use of visual and audio elements in an interactive way of learning. Different clinical cases can be simulated as virtual patients and students can practice clinical skills with this learning platform without the limitation of time and place. Suitable patients of various specialties are chosen and the patients' details are recorded. Patients are asked to provide responses to a number of designed questions which are necessary for making diagnosis and the responses are video-taped separately. Signs of the patients such as facial color, tongue image, special features on the body or skin are also be filmed. The cases are incorporated into a software, Virtual Practicum Learning Platform. In the platform, students can see the pictures and read the background information of the patients. They can then type the questions they want to ask the patient and the corresponding answers will be shown as video. Students can have a realistic feeling and are able to examine the patients' facial color, the voice, the appearance and the tongue by visual and audio perception. Students then need to analyze the etiology and pathogenesis of disease, make diagnosis and suggest therapeutic treatment plan. Correct answers and debriefing will be shown at the end of the practice.

Keywords: Chinese Medicine Education; Clinical Skill Training; Patient Simulator; Educational Technology; Interactive Learning