

Editorial

Use of Electronic Gadgets Facilitates Learning in Medical Students: A Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Experience

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Information technology has reached its zenith. Every year, new electronic devices and appliances are launched in the market and there is a craze to buy such products. Even a common man gets acquainted to the use of the latest device and takes pride in exhibiting such. In this context, the medical students are not left behind. Latest hand phones, i-pads, smart phones and laptops are purchased every day. While these electronic gadgets are used for various purposes, their main uses for academic purpose remain unexplored.

The role of internet is essential for students' learning. Recent studies showed that the use of internet facilities by medical students in developing countries is still lacking [1]. Interestingly, the same study [1] showed that there was significant difference between the male and female students with regards to the ability to search any database. Thus, the expertise to use internet based search engines is also necessary.

Didactic lectures may become monotonous and boring for any student. The students feel more attracted to new e-learning methods. The younger generation have adapted to the new technology gadgets and e-learning methods. It matters least whether the subject is handed over to the student in the form of lecture or even in the electronic form. In fact, it reduces the headache of carrying heavier books at all times and knowledge is rather dissipated in the electronic form. Knowledge at the fingertip through electronic means is always considered to be beneficial.

An earlier research study done in dermatology subject depicted an effective interactive teaching and exami-

nation model which was supplementary to the conventional style of bedside teaching in medical students [2]. Research has revealed that proper approach to e-learning may even change the physicians' performance and influence the patient outcome [3].

During a problem based learning session, the students make maximum use of their electronic gadgets but the source of information may not be authentic. Literature search from the convention search engines may benefit in terms of medical knowledge but the thousand dollars' worth question is "Do the students know which appropriate database or search engine to search?"

The Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia's (UKM) online digital library offers effective service in this regard. All books and journals are easily available online to subscribers and readers. The university has also developed a unique Jurnal Elektronik Teks Penuh (JET P) which helps the reader to get the information from any subscribed journal with a simple click. The university server also links to the subscribed databases with a simple click. The MD consult database covers a broad area for books. The students can read the text from any standard book on their electronic gadgets and the entire procedure is fast and easy for any beginner. As a lecturer, I take the opportunity to supply the electronic link to the students through the UKM i-Folio facility, from time to time. The students really enjoy reading genuine text from the online library. There are also efforts to use the digital library for virtual image learning in 3-D format.

Medical teaching has to be made interesting and enjoyable. There is no better way than to implement and resort to electronic form of knowledge transfer. Information technology should form an effective part of any teaching method and digital library could play an important role. At UKM, the experience is simply superb

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