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E-LEARNING IN HEALTHCARE SETTINGS IN SAUDI ARABIA

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Introduction: E-Learning is a widely-used method which has recently been expanding in healthcare settings. The use of technology to deliver and support learning has been utilised in continuous medical education for health professionals' in developed countries, and recently in Saudi Arabia. It has shown great success in improving medical education in numerous projects around the world, despite the challenges in adopting digital learning tools in professionals' workplaces. In Saudi Arabia, continuous medical education is facing many hindrances in its quality and effectiveness. Despite the promising future of e-learning in Saudi, this change could be faced with more evolving challenges. The healthcare development in Saudi Arabia has gone through a great transformation, where the most recent digital advancements have taken place, yet E-learning for professionals has only recently begun. This study will focus on reviewing the transformation of medical education and E-learning in Saudi Arabia, and the relevant challenges reported.

Methodology: This paper includes a review of the current stand of medical education in Saudi and the introduction of E-learning in the healthcare field. This will highlight the witnessed effectiveness of e-learning and explore the challenges experienced and that will believably evolve when continuous medical education takes a digital approach.

Results: The synthesis of the review demonstrates an effectiveness of E-learning in improving professionals' knowledge in at least a similar effect as traditional learning, yet applicability of this learning in everyday practice is still questioned. It also shows that speciality-focused e-learning tools are likely to provide desired results for learners. Among the challenges facing medical E-learning in Saudi are the requirements for effective reliable assessment of needs, the quality of learning contents, and the maturity level in the technological background and the infrastructure in healthcare settings.

Discussion and conclusion: The transformation of Saudi healthcare exhibits the rapid growth of healthcare technology adoption and thus it is expected to witness more e-learning projects that switch traditional CME delivery to 'paperless'. There is an obvious technology-positivism view in developing that area, which shows a great ambition, but in apparent need of guidance. It is important to realize the lack of experience and the immature infrastructure when implementing E-learning in the healthcare field. Looking at successful international examples would be very constructive in managing challenges observed and anticipating possible future ones. E-learning in Saudi healthcare settings needs to be studied widely to construct a foundation of knowledge to refer to. The further plan is to study the adoption of healthcare professionals of a newly implemented e-learning in a specialized hospital, to investigate an unexplored area in the fast-growing field in Saudi Arabia.

Biography

Baneen Alhmoud has completed her graduation from the College of Nursing, King Saud bin Abdulaziz University for Health Sciences, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She has worked and specialized in Cardiac Nursing as a Surgery Waiting List Manager. Later on, she went to the UK to study Health Informatics and obtained a Master's Degree from Swansea University. She has done a volunteer work as a Health Informatics Specialist. After that, she went back to Swansea University to pursue PhD in Health Informatics, especially Medical E-learning where she is currently working on her research.

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