Integrated medical informatics with small group teaching in medical education.

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Abstract

National Taiwan University College of Medicine (NTUCM) introduced small groups of teaching and basic-clinical integrated courses for medical students in 1992. By using computer network and multimedia techniques, this study tried to overcome barriers to learning in small group teaching. The Department of Medical Informatics of NTUCM established campus networking and computer classrooms and provided Internet and intranet network services including mail, netnews, bulletin board systems (BBS), world wide web (WWW), gopher, ftp and local file servers. To implement an interactive learning environment, the authors first tried mail lists, newsgroups and BBS. Next an integrated learning system prototype on the WWW was developed to provide functions including online syllabus, discussion boards simulated to BBS, online talk, interactive case studies, virtual classroom with video on demand (VOD) and Internet medical resources. The results showed that after the medical students completed the required course of medical informatics and had good network access using a network to communicate with each other became a daily practice. In the future, the system will extend to the tutoring of clinical practice and continuing medical education. The authors expect a national medical education network and more international cooperation and exchange.