Development of a Patient Safety E-Learning Programme for Doctors

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INTRODUCTION

Patient safety education and research have been prioritised by the Report of the Commission on Patient Safety and Quality Assurance[1]. The HSE Medical Education and Training Research Unit (HSE METR) through the Forum of Irish Postgraduate Medical Training Bodies funded the RCSI and RCPI to develop a patient safety e-learning programme for doctors. In 2010, the RCSI, RCPI and Clinical Indemnity Scheme collaborated to develop the programme consisting of five core modules. Two additional modules were developed in 2011 involving collaboration across the RCSI, RCPI, National Medicines Information Centre and Irish Medication Safety Network.

In Ireland, e-learning packages have been developed to train healthcare professionals in a broad range of areas including clinical skills, healthcare management and IT skills. Prior to this project, a patient safety e-learning programme had yet to be developed for graduate medical practitioners working in Ireland. However progress had been made in other jurisdictions and disciplines. For example, the Royal College of Physicians, on behalf of the NHS, established the Safe Foundations for Junior Doctors E-Learning Programme in 2006. Therefore, this project addressed the need for a patient safety e-learning programme for graduate medical practitioners working in Ireland.

AIMS

Specific objectives were formed to operationalise the project. These included:

- To develop an online patient safety awareness programme which would be suitable for Senior House Officers and Registrars across all the medical training bodies in Ireland.
- To develop core content for the programme based on international patient safety curriculum guides[2,3] and patient safety competencies frameworks designated for all healthcare professionals[4].
- To deliver the e-learning programme in accordance with best practice.
- To pilot the e-learning programme and make appropriate amendments.

METHODS

- Modules were developed based on research, consultation and evidenced based practice.
- The finalised curriculum content was piloted and verified by two independent experts from the RCSI and RCPI and appropriate amendments were made.
- An e-learning company, Dillon Productions, was sourced to provide the technology to support the curriculum. The College representatives liaised with these to provide the educational resources needed to build an online interactive programme. These resources included storyboards, voice over scripts, case studies and expert interviews.

Photos from Case Study Filming Day:

PROGRAMME OUTPUTS & OUTCOMES

Outputs:

Five core modules:

- Introduction to Patient Safety
- Understanding Adverse Events and Near Misses
- Open Communication
- Caring for the Second Victim
- Learning from Adverse Events & Near Misses

Additional modules:

- Medication Safety
- Healthcare Associated Infections

Interactive modules:

- In addition to the core content, each module features acted case studies and practical advice for applying the learning from these in practice. Each module also includes video footage containing expert guidance from key leaders active in the patient safety movement in Ireland.
- Throughout the modules questions appear to reinforce the learning of participants. Upon completion of the programme, participants complete an assessment comprising of multiple choice questions.

Implementation:
The programme was launched in September 2010 and has been made available to all the training bodies. The programme is forming part of mandatory training in some training bodies from July 2011.

Evaluation:
The impact of the programme on trainees patient safety knowledge, skills and attitudes will be evaluated using a before and after online survey. This approach has been previously used to evaluate the impact of patient safety programmes in the US[5] and Hong Kong[6]. Expected outcomes include:

- Increased awareness of patient safety education and risk management among graduate medical practitioners.
- Cost and resource effective method to deliver patient safety education.
- Improved access to patient safety education, considering the geographic spread and commitments of healthcare professionals.

CONCLUSION

The development of this evidenced based e-learning programme represents a further advancement of the patient safety philosophy in Ireland. Outcomes of the planned evaluation across training bodies in 2012 will illuminate its impact on trainees from the perspectives of knowledge, skills and attitudes.

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