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Are games the future of medical education?

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Choosing a career in medicine means; committing to lifelong learning, to keep abreast with current specialty developments. This is a daunting task and technology often has a solution to help make this process straightforward. Automated emails can inform you of the most recent publications in a particular research field. The latest version of Anesthesia and Analgesia can be downloaded to an iPad, videos embedded in articles enhance the experience particularly useful for myself interested in echocardiography. Anaesthetists need to remain competent to deal with emergency scenarios that occur on an average once, twice or less in an individual's career. These include the treatment of anaphylaxis, malignant hyperthermia, local anaesthetic toxicity and venous air embolism. Specific treatment algorithms are required and anaesthetists need to remain adequately prepared to deal with these scenarios if and when they arrive. Simulation is one method for keeping familiar with these algorithms. Critical incident training is provided for trainees across my region and departments are beginning to provide yearly simulation updates for their consultants. This is an expensive resource, requiring specialist equipment and trained staff to facilitate. Anaesthetists' practical skills will be adequate; it is the incident specific protocols that require revision. The author believes serious games are an effective alternative for providing these updates. Anaesthetists use smart phones and tablets daily to update log books, access textbooks or drug references, and an additional game app to keep up to date with resuscitation algorithms would fit nicely into the professional life of most of the anaesthetists.

Biography

Gareth B Kitchen is a Fellow of the Royal College of Anaesthetists, and an advanced cardiac Anaesthesia Registrar at the University Hospital of South Manchester. His interests include cardiac anaesthesia, anaesthetic allergy & anaphylaxis and information technology & medical education. He completed his Medical Degree at the University of Manchester in 2007.

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