

How to design an e-learning tool for training health care professionals in addressing subjective illness models

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Previous studies showed that patient's subjective illness models relate to the way patients manage their disorders. At the same time, it appeared that health care professionals (HC professionals) rarely discuss these models. The explicit addressing of subjective illness models requires specific communication styles: for instance attention to patients' concerns and psychosocial/lifestyle issues. Although in research settings it was shown that training is possible, in real life practise HC professionals seldom train to improve their patient-communication skills.

There are many reasons for this lack of training in patient-communication skills. To start with, this kind of training is considered to be too time consuming. Next, courses are not always adapted to specific learning goals. Furthermore, a course is not an alternative for on-the-job situations that need to be met in a specific time and place. Moreover, time and place of available courses – if any – are fixed. Consequently, HC professionals become de-motivated, although they underline the importance of these skills as well as the importance of continuous education.

Learning through internet offers large potential to overcome these problems. E-learning programs can provide training 'just in time, just enough, just for you'. Such e-learning programs should not only address specific learning goals according to sound didactical principles, but at the same time employ technical features for adaptation to a broad individualized audience. These requirements can only be achieved by means of an iterative process of analyses, design, development, implementation and evaluation. During our presentation, we will show how an e-learning tool can be developed for training HC professionals in addressing subjective illness models.

Keywords: e-learning, educational design, subjective illness models, health care professionals