

European Early Career Psychiatrists' Views On E-learning: Preliminary Findings of a Focus Group Study

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Introduction:

E-learning may be a cost-efficient alternative or addition to traditional continuous medical education (CME) face-to-face courses. Even though some data are available regarding views on e-learning of general medicine physicians, preferences of psychiatrists have not been systematically assessed as yet.

Aims:

To assess early career psychiatrists' (ECPs) preferences on e-learning.

Objectives:

To explore: 1) What do early career psychiatrists want to learn via e-learning? 2) How should e-learning be provided?

Methods:

Online focus groups were conducted via skype. Participants were purposively sampled for professional qualification (trainees/newly-qualified psychiatrists) and recruited in 14 European countries. Qualitative analysis of the data is in progress. Preliminary findings are presented.

Results:

Four focus groups with in total 20 early career psychiatrists from different countries were conducted. The number of participants to focus groups varied from four to seven.

ECPs would use e-learning to learn about topics not normally taught during standard psychiatric training, and to have contact with experts in the field. E-learning courses on general basic knowledge (psychotherapy theories, psycho-pharmacology) need to be related to clinical practice.

ECPs suggested that e-learning courses should be interactive, user-friendly and accredited by national authorities. Cost of e-learning courses and lack of awareness of e-learning opportunities are significant barriers to access, particularly for trainees.

Conclusions:

Access of ECPs to e-learning may be increased by offering information on courses and affordable fees. Content-wise, e-learning should provide specialist knowledge or training in generic skills closely related to practice. E-learning courses should be delivered by renowned international experts.