

**Title:** Establishing a unit for development of online education at a medical school in a developing country

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**The context and setting:** Our Medical School is an isolated school running 2 undergraduate courses, medicine and nursing. In 1997 new curricula was implemented in both courses promoting active and meaningful learning as well as small group work. The medical school also runs a program for faculty development to enhance pedagogical concepts and facilitate process of teaching-learning. One of the disciplines of both courses focuses on the context of the patient, i.e. the community and family. Their training takes place in family health care units (FHCU).

The faculty development courses in our program take place on campus. Tutors from the FHCU's are considered part of faculty staff and are therefore eligible to enroll in the program activities.

**Why the idea or change was necessary:** The multi-professional teams working in the FHCU's need to take part in faculty development courses, but due to their work responsibilities don't have the time to attend these courses during normal working hours. The medical school has expertise and facilities, but is only open at business hours. Online communication would be a solution to this problem and this would fit into the plan by the Ministry of Health to increase IT capabilities throughout Brazil.

**What was done:** A unit was created to support and promote institutional development, including faculty development courses, mainly by online education. Computer equipment was bought for all FHCU's of the city. Staff was trained to digitalize content material.

An analysis of the Emergency Care Unit (ECU) of our hospital was done to show the most prevalent diseases that can be managed at the FHCU level. This was done to show that consultations at the ECU can probably be treated at FHCU level. This analysis showed 7 conditions of top 10: 1) acute upper respiratory infections, 2) normal pregnancy consultation, 3) pneumonia, 4) diarrhea and gastroenteritis, 5) dorsalgia, 6) other anxiety disorders, and 7) abdominal and pelvic pain. Conditions related to ECU primary consultations are: 1) mental and behavioral disorders due to use of alcohol, 2) intracranial injury, 3) other disorders of conjunctiva. In the sequence a needs assessment among FHCU staff was done using the first list that showed that their primary training need is anxiety disorders. 16 preceptors and 19 residents answered the questionnaire. A group of faculty and health professionals formed a team to implement the first course in that subject.

Teleduc, a tri-language environment free-software from a Brazilian University, was chosen and installed. The group at the unit is preparing the course. Clinical case scenarios will be used to stimulate discussion among participants. The same philosophical educational principles from the undergraduate courses will apply.

**Evaluation of the results or impact:** There is great interest from FHCU staff to be part in this project as shown by the 77% that positively answered the needs assessment. The project is supported by the Health Secretary of the city. The computer equipment was bought by another project to support this one and implementation in the FHCU's started. This is a US\$ 100,000 investment.