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Dear Editor

In the spirit of this special WONCA edition we would like to encourage readers to consider sharing best educational practice across geographical, socioeconomic and cultural boundaries through internet-based collaborative working technologies.

There are many web conferencing facilities that are now free and open-access, and the costs of producing a shared workshop, webinar, a piece of e-learning, or even a remotely-delivered lecture are falling. As platforms are now cloud-based, all that is needed in even the most resource-poor setting is bandwidth, which is increasing exponentially in both availability and speed. Even language barriers are falling with freely available translation software that can translate a carefully worded document or website at the click of a button.

King's College London (KCL) has recently piloted a successful curriculum collaboration with Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), Greece, to promote obesity-related behavioural-change teaching and learning. A single webinar with shared resources has resulted (so far) in 117 senior year medical students discussing obesity with more than 1100 patients in 63 GP settings in Greece. Students at AUTH have benefited from a mature KCL curriculum programme that took over three years to develop. As a result, those students are now using evidence-based behaviour-change techniques such as patient-centred broaching and exploring skills, goal-setting and action-planning, importance and confidence scales, and patient-led problem solving, with an associated assessment for learning in place.

Greece is a country that is burdened by financial austerity, the highest levels of obesity in Europe, and the highest level of paediatric obesity in the world. Small, low-cost collaborations such as this have the potential to allow countries to leapfrog on each-others' successes, building a more sustainable and higher quality healthcare system through education at minimal cost.

The impact of this webinar has been evaluated at Kirkpatrick Level 3, in that it has changed student behaviour in clinical settings. We are now in the process of evaluating patient outcomes and intend to submit our results presently. A similar collaboration with the University of São Paulo is planned.

We would be very interested in hearing about, learning from, and supporting any similar projects.

Yours faithfully

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