The School of Medicine at Imperial College has used broadcasting technologies to deliver clinical lectures since 1998. The system covered 15 teaching rooms in 10 different hospital campuses across London. More recently, the sustainability of the system and of teaching approach became less certain as changes in NHS clinical service delivery were impacting on students’ attendance. Increasing pressure upon doctors to deliver service targets, the European Working Time Directive and changes in the way in which we deliver healthcare (Olson et al 2005), coupled with higher numbers of students entering medical education (Beattie et al 2005). Various forms of representative simulation, many of which use digital technology, have become an increasingly common alternative in healthcare education (Bogg et al 2005).

New educational drivers were required to bring our learning and teaching into the 21st century. The model of e-lecture programme developed uses interactive technologies, including Web 2.0 technology and e-learning tools, to assist learning and teaching in the clinical programme for medical students during Year 3 of the MBBS. The technology used to deliver this programme is not new, however, the way it has been put together to deliver a clinical e-lecture programme has proved to be innovative curriculum practice and a stimulating learning experience for the students.

METHODS

Using Microsoft PowerPoint versions in the lecture theatre with access to interactive whiteboard technology available at Imperial College London (Beattie et al 2005) (Figure 4). These were delivered using the Blackboard learning management system (blackboard.com). The system was accessed via the Internet using a machine located either in the lecture theatre, a computer room or an area within our own homes. The technology used to deliver this programme is not new; however, the way it has been put together to deliver a clinical e-lecture programme has proved to be innovative curriculum practice and a stimulating learning experience for the students.

RESULTS

A total of 110 lectures were provided, offering a wide range of online lecture material to different groups. These included e-lectures, podcasts, question and answer sessions and virtual patients. From student feedback, the model of the e-lecture programme is effective and popular among students and therefore provides a base for future development.

RESULTS CONTINUED

Figure 9: Did you find the course useful in learning new facts?

Many students found the e-modules easy to navigate and use (85%). Only 26% of the students actually found the podcasts and vodcasts useful and 21% of students downloaded them (See Figure 10). Only 11% of students actually accessed the podcasts and vodcasts on their iPod/MP3 or MP4 player, and only 26% they had downloaded them (See Figure 10). A very high number of students (92%) found the Blackboard useful in identifying gaps in their knowledge. The ‘pod’ quizzes were very well received by the students, with 71% finding them helpful in identifying areas for improvement. They were also very popular with the e-lecture programme in the Final Year, which has also been developed following this study and the experience has been a fantastic learning experience.

CONCLUSION

The e-lecture programme has been delivered as envisaged. The objectives have been achieved and this approach has proved both practical and compatible with the current technology used by the students. Student feedback has been very positive and student uptake has been extremely successful. However, it is worth pointing out that the uptake may be influenced by the students’ preference to work or study outside the lecture theatre. Further analysis of the feedback is ongoing, and this will help to identify further learning opportunities.

REFERENCES
