ENABLING INTEROPERABILITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND REUSABILITY OF VIRTUAL PATIENTS – FINDINGS FROM THE EVIP PROJECT

Nabil Zary¹, Inga Hege², Jörn Heid³, Andrzej A. Kononowicz⁴, Luke Woodham⁵, Jeroen Donkers⁶

¹Karolinska Institutet, Sweden
²Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, Germany
³University Clinical of Heidelberg, Germany
⁴Jagiellonian University, Faculty of Medicine, Poland
⁵St. George’s, University of London, United Kingdom
⁶Maastricht University, The Netherlands

contact author: Nabil Zary, nabil@medicalsimulation.net

The electronic virtual patient project (eViP) is a 3-year programme co-funded by the European Union. One of the major goals of eViP is to enable the sharing of virtual patients (VP) across medical education centres. This addresses a frequent problem in the development of e-learning resources, namely the lack of available time and resources while at the same time a lot of effort is wasted on duplicative work. The foundation of a successful and efficient bank of educational resources is a common interoperability standard that would facilitate the migration of data between diverse systems. A common standard (eViP profile), based on the MedBiquitous specifications for VPs, was implemented by the partners’ VP systems in order to support the exchange process. The participating systems are CAMPUS, Casus, OpenLabyrinth and Web-SP, which offer a variety of functionalities and each of which has its own technical and didactical approach. All systems implemented the eViP profile at the end of 2008 which enabled a standardized import and export of the VPs. The export procedures were designed to be completely automatic and contain as much of the virtual patient content as possible. The import had in some cases to be customized. The implementation of the eViP profile, being its first large-scale implementation, also constituted a major driving force in the further development of the MedBiquitous specification for virtual patients. The great variety of the included systems turned out to be a major challenge for the project. We will present the crucial steps and issues encountered during the implementation of the eViP profile.

Keywords: healthcare standards, interoperability, virtual patient, MedBiquitous, technical implementation