Background: Virtual patients (VPs) were introduced at the dental school at Karolinska Institutet (KI) in 2002. The initial adoption of the VPs was in the field of comprehensive dentistry. In 2007 a prospective longitudinal study was initiated to experiment different models for increasing the adoption and use of VPs based on Rogers’s diffusion of innovations theory. The aim of this sub-study was to investigate if two dissemination activities could be employed by early adopters to drive the adoption process.

Method: A team composed of an early adopter of VPs at the dental school and a learning technologist was formed. The entire faculty (n=76) at the dental school was recruited to the first intervention – an introduction seminar about VPs and a short hands-on exercise. Interested teachers were then asked to sign up for the second intervention – a thorough individualized training session. Finally after 5 months data was collected about courses that implemented VPs as a regular learning activity. Questionnaires were filled-in by the participants after each intervention.

Result: The team composed of a subject matter expert and a learning technologist had the required competencies for the interventions planned. Of the recruited faculty, 20% (n=15) showed an active interest for learning more about how to author and use VPs. Four teachers (5%) implemented VPs in their courses after a few months. The proposed model with a team, composed a subject matter expert and a learning technologist, and a two interventions managed to diffuse the innovation to a subset of the early majority.

Keywords: virtual patient, implementation, dentistry education, adoption