

The Increased Spotlight on Digital CME



Christina Hoffman, MS, Group Vice President, Quality & Strategy at Medscape Education

In 2009, the American College of Chest Physicians published an article in *CHEST* that explored the future of continuing medical education (CME) and focused on the impact of technology on physician learning, including on the importance of digital CME. Now, in 2020, digital CME has evolved to include a variety of innovative formats and platforms, multi-device access, and increased outcomes measurement, among other benefits. In recent months, a spotlight has shone even brighter on digital CME as the world reacts to the need to learn virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic and still stay current in the practice of medicine.

Physicians Value Digital Health Education

Physicians value digital education because it is flexible and accessible, allowing them to learn on their time, and to fit education into their busy practice schedule.

The Decision Resources Group's 2019 *Taking The Pulse*[®] survey found that half of the time physicians spend online is spent brushing up on their medical knowledge, searching for materials to support their clinical practice, or answering questions that arise during visits with patients.¹ In other words, they are spending their time seeking out digital resources like CME, and they're doing so for a practice reason. The 2009 *CHEST* article made note of the specific ability of digital CME to provide "just in time" learning²—a feature unique to digital platforms. Digital CME is available when and where physicians need it, providing them with the education that is most relevant to their practice.

Digital CME is in the spotlight in our current environment as live education options are limited, and research shows this will continue after the COVID-19 pandemic is in hand. Clinicians expect to lean into digital more than ever—93% of physicians expect to use digital tools for clinical-decision support the same amount, greater, or significantly greater after the COVID-19 crisis.³

Medscape is the leading provider of digital education (CME) worldwide¹ with proven, demonstrated ability to change clinical practical behavior in vast audiences.

A 2020 peer-reviewed study published in collaboration with the FDA demonstrates the power of Medscape digital education to positively impact public health. The study ex-

amines the efficacy of targeted short-form messaging and CME aimed at reducing overprescribing of fluoroquinolone antibiotics. The study examined nearly 24K high prescribers of fluoroquinolones and divided 11,774 into 3 treatment groups to evaluate and measure the effectiveness of communication and education methodology:

- Group 1 - Received short-form targeted messaging only (n = 8895)
- Group 2 - Received CME activity only (n = 1756)
- Group 3 - Received both short-form targeted messaging and CME (n = 1123)

The trial featured a case-matched control group (n = 11,774) and results were stated against that comparator population. The study demonstrated the statistically significant impact of digital CME (with or without messaging) to reduce inappropriate clinical behavior.⁴

Medscape Education has been a leader in digital CME for more than 25 years, reaching over 5 million physicians worldwide who come to Medscape for the learning that they need. With the global health crisis of COVID-19, it is more important than ever that physicians have access to scientifically rigorous, independent, accurate, and clinically relevant education. Physicians will continue to turn to digital CME in order to receive the education they need. As a trusted learning partner for the medical community with proven ability to deliver education that makes an impact, Medscape is committed to delivering digital CME to learners where, when, and how they want to learn. ●

¹ DRG Digital Taking The Pulse[®] US, 2019

² Lowe MM, Aparicio A, Galbraith R, et al. The future of continuing medical education: effectiveness of continuing medical education: American College of Chest Physicians Evidence-Based Educational Guidelines. *Chest*. 2009;135(3 Suppl): 69S-75S.

³ Kelleher K, Kumar K, Patel P, Schrader U. *Pharma operations: The path to recovery and the next normal*. McKinsey. 2020 May. Available from <https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/pharmaceuticals-and-medical-products/our-insights/pharma-operations-the-path-to-recovery-and-the-next-normal#>

⁴ Whyte J, Winiacki S, Hoffman C, Patel K. FDA collaboration to improve safe use of fluoroquinolone antibiotics: an ex post facto matched control study of targeted short-form messaging and online education served to high prescribers. *Pharm Pract (Granada) [Internet]*. 2020Apr.24 [cited 2020May9];18(2):1773. Available from: <https://pharmacypractice.org/journal/index.php/pp/article/view/1773>.