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DIAGNOSTIC PATHOLOGY

ORAL PRESENTATION

Digital slide and virtual microscope based graduate and postgraduate education program: a 3 year experience

László Fónyad[1], László Gerely[2], Mária Cserneky[1], BélaMolnár[2], and András Matolcsy[1]

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Background

The success and spreading of digital microscopes Worldwide is unquestionable. During the past 3-5 years the vendors in the field of digital microscopy developed robust hardwares and sophisticated softwers. Digital slides become a part of everyday life in research and now claim their place in the routine pathology workflow also. Still one of the most popular field of using these applications where we can really take advantage of them is education. Our department has always been a pioneer applying digital slides. On the ECP 2007, we reported the development of an educational software package: E-School. After the succesful introduction of the system, we decided to replace all optical microscopes in education, with computers. First results were presented in the IAP congress in Athen in 2008.

Methods and results

We set up a digital histology lab with 40 commercially available PCs, a slide server and built up an intranet that connects the 40 PCs with the teacher's laptop and the local server. We digitized 200 slides. (The revised educational material completed with special stains and IHC-slides.) The slides were uploaded to a slide server, www.pathonet.com, with 24 hour external access service for our students to the entire material. During exam periods there are over 100.000 page loads/month (by the average 350 students/semester!). In the last years our new lab served 1000 hours of histology practice. The satisfaction tests provided excellent results and served valuable information on how to continue the development of our digital lab.

Conclusions

Going digital didn't solve all our problem, rather generated new ones. Still we are confirmed that digital slides have got numerous advantages over optical slides and are better to use in education. Medical education is very expensive everywhere in the World, thus students claim for stanardisation, for the same opportunities and circumstances. With DS universities got the opportunity to provide exactly the same quality material for all the students.

Author details
[1]1st. Dept. of Pathology and Experimental Cancer Research, Semmelweis University, Budapest, Hungary
[2]3DHISTECH Ltd., Budapest, Hungary

Email: fonyadla@gmail.com

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