Background: In everyday clinical situations, physicians must find reliable information under time pressure. The identified literature should lead them to a practical solution on how to best treat their patient. In the Basel medical curriculum, we designed a learning unit that addresses these aspects of time constraint and decision making. We implemented it using a gamification-approach in an on-site format with cooperative working which we called “Searchaton”. Together with a webinar, this Searchaton is part of the literature searching format “med-info-pro” (medical information professional) https://med-info-pro.unibas.ch.

Searchaton: In a playful contest, students compete against each other as teams. They receive the same “mission” at the same time: a clinical case vignette including a specific clinical question that was written for this purpose by a physician. They have to choose the appropriate search resources and search strategy, and finally decide on a therapeutic recommendation. Time is – as in reality – limited. After 50 minutes, the students have to report their results to a jury, composed of a health librarian and a physician. The jury gives short feedback on an ad hoc basis and honors the team with the best results.

Results: Succeeding a 2-hour webinar where theory on information literacy was treated, we first carried out the Searchaton with Basel medical students in 2018. The Searchaton proved to be a resource-intensive teaching format: The number of participants needs to be limited, so that the jury can sift through the results in a short time and give feedback on all solutions.

Conclusions: In our case, the number of participants in the first run was 10. However, these participants benefited greatly from the intensive support and appreciated the integration of literature searching and clinical decision making in this learning format. In addition to traditional training concepts for literature searching, a playful teaching format with a limited number of students provides the opportunity to deal with aspects such as time-efficient and cooperative working in searching literature, as well as evidence-based clinical decision-making.

The clinical case vignette

Anamnesis

• Corpulent man, 68 years old
• Type 2 diabetes mellitus (since 3 years)
• arterial hypertension und adiposity
• Current therapy
  ✓ Metformin 1000 mg 1-0-1
  ✓ A Statin
  ✓ An ACE-inhibitor
• Goal = Expansion of perioral therapy (Insulin-based therapy not possible)

Wrap-up (15')

• Feedback by jury
• Questions