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TRAINING HEALTH RESEARCHERS BY EXPERIENCE-SHARING, HARNESSING ONLINE LEARNING DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

The socio-economic benefits of improved healthcare are considered as an important indicator for the development of a country. This requires a step-change in the training of early career healthcare workers who need to be empowered to conduct healthcare research in order to support evidence-based change. One barrier to involvement is that healthcare research methodologies can appear complex and inaccessible, especially as there is a need to understand the lived experience of patients alongside treatment effectiveness, requiring mixed methodologies. Bringing together a community of early-career healthcare researchers and potential researchers from the UK and Turkey for co-designing and creating a series of multimedia educational resources that explore how different research methodologies can be applied to investigate health-related issues were given priority in this project.

The objectives for the project were: the first is to form a collaborative community of practice around healthcare research methods for young researchers between Koç University, Turkey and the University of Nottingham, UK; and the second is to develop 5 X 15-minute multimedia learning resources explaining the application of research methods to different aspects of health research. Lastly, to achieve these objectives, "train-the-trainer" was organized to start collaboration among young researchers and to support the production of multimedia learning resources through implementing the ASPIRE community-based iterative design process which was an entirely new concept for the Turkish partner.

The impact of the covid-19 pandemic on the progress of this project has been very significant. The international travel ban has meant that the project has had to be delayed and re-thought. However, one of the great and unintended successes of the project has been that we have been working together across the two partners to develop tools and processes that will enable the establishment of an online community of practice and we have developed an online version of the ASPIRE process that can be used with a wide range of communities. Due to Covid-19, all project components including the train-the-trainer workshop, storyboard section, and RLO development were completed on online platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Mural. In total 12 young researchers from Koç University, representing early career researchers, Ph.D. and master's students came together with 10 young researchers from the University of Nottingham. At the end of the project, five multimedia learning resources (Validating Questionnaires, Understanding Pragmatic Research, Understanding Qualitative Fieldwork, The Purpose and Uses of Qualitative Research, and introducing Action Research) were developed via online tools.

Interim/pilot evaluation with a smaller number of learners has been conducted to see the initial results. Out of sixteen participants, early Ph.D. students in both the UK and Turkey who completed a comprehensive evaluation form 94% of them reported the resources as helpful or very helpful for their learning and there was a 100% recommendation for others to use them. Learners commented on the ease of understanding, the visual and interactive nature of the materials. It is planned to integrate/embed the developed materials into master's courses and evaluate their impact on young career healthcare researchers.

Keywords: Reusable learning objectives, health researcher, experience-sharing, online developing.

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