17,000 doctors and nurses training during COVID-19 using virtual simulation technology

Tuesday 31 March, 2020

- **Thousands of doctors and nurses are returning to clinical practice during the COVID-19 pandemic**
- **There is a need for rapid training to help them care for patients effectively**
- **Oxford Medical Simulation is helping hospitals and health systems provide training for free**
- **17,000 doctors and nurses are to be trained on the platform over the coming weeks**

March 30, 2020

Healthcare education in COVID-19

Faced with the COVID-19 pandemic, hospital worldwide have an urgent need for doctors and nurses. Huge numbers of retired doctors and nurses have been called up - 20,000 in the UK's NHS alone. Medical and nursing students are also being called up to the front lines early.

Both groups need rapid up-skilling. At a time of immense pressures on the system, and at a time of social distancing, in-person training is challenging.

In response, Oxford Medical Simulation – a virtual reality simulation company – has begun offering the use of their system for free to hospitals and universities in the across the US, Canada and the UK. The OMS system allows learners practice in virtual cases, such as treating patients with shortness of breath or heart attacks, so they don't make mistakes with real life patients.

The system works both in immersive virtual reality (using VR headsets) and as a screen-based simulation using the learner's own PC or laptop. This allows use at home during social distancing as well as use with fully immersive virtual reality as required.

Dr. Jack Pottle, an NHS clinical entrepreneur and chief medical officer of Oxford Medical Simulation explains:

"Doctors and nurses around the world are working in unbelievably challenging situations, often treating patients in areas outside their fields of expertise. Though this is entirely necessary in such an extreme situation, many are concerned about their skills and experience in these areas. It is therefore the least we can do to help them improve their confidence and competence in caring for their patients. They are the heroes of this pandemic and we will do everything we can to help support them"

Uptake of OMS Distance during COVID-19

Since March 16, over 50 institutions - with over 17,000 learners between them - have signed up to use the OMS platform. Many have started utilizing the platform already and many more will start over the coming days. This is being done across all levels of medicine and nursing both in hospitals and in universities.

This includes use by nursing programs unable to deliver clinical placements to their students; medical programs fast-tracking their medical students for clinical practice; hospitals up-skilling clinicians moving between departments; and health systems rapidly retraining clinicians returning to practice.

All need clinical training at scale, and it is only with the advent of new technology such as virtual reality and distance simulation programs institutions can offer such immediate training across such large groups of learners.

As Dr. Pottle notes: "The scale of the task for healthcare and healthcare education is enormous, and it is a privilege to be able to support clinicians in this difficult time."

For more information about OMS and its technology: https://oxfordmedicalsimulation.com/.

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