



Attitudes to Virtual Patients

Hello again INHWE Members! Today, we have another exciting opportunity to share with you on behalf of one of our fellow members. Researchers from Flinders University, the University of Queensland, and the University of South Australia are embarking on a study exploring health professionals' attitudes towards the use of virtual patients in communication skills training. Virtual patients offer a unique avenue for health professionals to learn and practice communication skills in a safe and structured environment. They provide a realistic and immersive experience that allows professionals to enhance their skills and build confidence.

If you would like to contribute your expertise and insights then the research consortium would love to hear from you. Your participation would involve completing a short online survey about your views on the use of virtual patients in communication skills training. The survey is completely anonymous and should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. Your input will contribute to the understanding of the potential benefits and challenges of utilizing virtual patients in this context. If you would like to participate and share your views, please access the survey through the button below.

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The overall aim of the research is to explore health professionals' attitudes to virtual patient conversational agents, also called 'virtual patient chatbots', for communication skills training. Chatbots are software programs that interact with humans through written or spoken language, such as Siri or Google Assistant. A virtual patient chatbot allows health students and health professionals to have a simulated 'conversation' with a virtual patient for the purpose of skill development. Virtual patient chatbots can be used in teaching many kinds of skills, including communication skills. The use of technology in education is increasing, especially with the arrival of AI, and here at INHWE we believe that such research is of fundamental importance to healthcare education. We look forward to hearing more from our members once the research starts producing results.

David Smith

Director

