WEBSITES/ONLINE RESOURCES

Explore the Causes of Health-Care-Acquired Infections: Who Is at Fault?
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Many Microbiology instructors teach future healthcare providers. Those of us who teach these students recognize the need to show the relevance of microbiology to their future workplace situations. While searching for appropriate topics to include in my hybrid microbiology course, I found a video simulation of a healthcare–acquired infection scenario called Partnering to Heal (www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/ hai/training/partneringtoheal.html or home page www.hhs.gov/ash/initiatives/hai/training/). The simulation is a fictional story which includes characters who contributed to the MRSA (Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus) infection and death of “Whitney,” a college student. The characters include a physician, a registered nurse, an infection preventionist, a family member of another patient, and a third-year medical student, as well as the patient. All of the supporting characters make mistakes which microbiology students should be able to recognize as they view the simulation.

The video simulation includes a 6.5 minute Introduction Video which summarizes the entire scenario including each character’s role in the tragedy. This video was used as a discussion starter with my online lecture students. Though most students could recognize the mistakes made, they often attributed characteristics to and placed blame on the different individuals. This led to discussion about what causes “laziness” in a nurse or “irresponsible behavior” in a visiting family member. This resource was invaluable in highlighting things that can and do go wrong in a healthcare setting which have disastrous consequences. My plan was to engage my online students in a relevant topic. With 75 hits on the online discussion board (from 40 students), I consider this a successful teaching tool.

If an instructor wants more in-depth coverage of the topic, there are 30 minute (approx.) videos that allow students to follow each character and determine the course of action taken. The facilitator’s guide provides excellent questions that can be used to stimulate discussions. There is also a page of internet resources to help students gather more information about the issues raised. Depending on your instructional needs, this website can be used in several different ways. It can be used to engage students in a discussion, as group projects with presentations of each character’s issues and solutions, or as a supplementary semester-long teaching tool for individual students in an online classroom environment.

This simulation was produced by the US Department of Health and Human Services Action Plan to Prevent Health-care–Associated Infections in order to help train clinicians, students, and patient advocates. It is an excellent resource to use as a quick conversation starter if you use the introductory video or as a longer activity to examine the role of different healthcare providers and customers. All of the videos and materials are downloadable which is another asset, as some students may have limited internet access. The videos and materials are free for educational purposes. I highly recommend this website as a supplemental tool for opening a discussion of healthcare–acquired infections, especially in an online classroom.

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