

Can We Make Continuing Medical Education and Continuing Professional Development More Interesting for Healthcare Professionals?

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INTRODUCTION

Continuing medical education (CME) and continuing professional development (CPD) play a crucial role in ensuring healthcare professionals remain up to date with the latest advancements, improve their clinical skills, and ultimately provide the best care to their patients.^{1,2} Clinicians, whether they are doctors or other healthcare professionals, have clear expectations from CME programs. Since these programs play a vital role in their professional development, it is essential that CME activities meet their needs and provide value.

CLINICIANS' EXPECTATION FROM CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION/CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Clinicians expect CME/CPD programs to provide current, evidence-based information on medical advancements, emerging treatments, and evolving guidelines relevant to their specialty, such as cardiology, oncology, or pediatrics, or their practice setting, including hospitals or private practices. They seek practical insights, case studies, and real-life clinical scenarios that help solve complex cases and improve patient care. Additionally, they demand transparency and independence in CME/CPD programs, particularly those sponsored by pharmaceutical companies. Full disclosure of conflicts of interest, a clear distinction between education and product promotion, and unbiased, scientifically driven content focused on patient care are essential.

Accreditation by reputable organizations and medical educational institutes is highly valued, as it ensures high-quality standards and official recognition for licensing and certification. Given their demanding schedules, clinicians

prefer flexible learning formats like online courses, webinars, and on-demand content, along with blended learning models that integrate live and digital education. Mobile-friendly platforms further enhance accessibility, allowing seamless learning anytime, anywhere.

Engagement is another critical factor, as clinicians appreciate interactive elements such as discussions, case-based learning, quizzes, and group activities, which improve knowledge retention compared to passive lectures. They also expect CME/CPD programs to be personalized and specialty-specific, catering to their unique learning needs based on specialty, experience level, and practice setting. Customizable modules and tailored learning pathways ensure relevance and applicability. The credibility of faculty also plays a crucial role, as clinicians seek to learn from renowned experts, thought leaders, and key opinion leaders (KOLs) whose expertise enhances the program's trustworthiness.

One challenge that educators and organizations face is making these educational programs engaging, interactive, and relevant enough to captivate busy healthcare professionals who already juggle demanding schedules. While traditional methods of CME/CPD, such as lectures and written materials, remain valuable, there is a growing recognition that healthcare professionals need more dynamic, engaging, and meaningful learning experiences.

LET'S MAKE CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION/CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MORE EFFECTIVE

To make CME/CPD more effective, shifting toward interactive and engaging content is crucial.³ Traditional CME/CPD programs often involve passive learning, where healthcare professionals listen to lectures or watch presentations. While informative, this does not always capture the attention or interest of busy clinicians who are accustomed to dynamic environments requiring quick thinking and decision-making. Incorporating case-based learning, where real-life clinical cases are presented for discussion, makes learning more practical and relevant. Gamification, which introduces elements such as quizzes, points, and levels, enhances engagement and reinforces learning through repetition and friendly competition. Interactive

webinars and workshops featuring Q&A sessions, polls, and real-time discussions allow clinicians to interact with the content actively.

Tailoring content to clinicians' specific needs and interests is another way to improve CME/CPD programs. Offering educational content that aligns with their professional goals, clinical interests, and practice needs prevents disengagement. Personalized learning paths allow clinicians to choose modules relevant to their specialty, experience, and areas of interest. Modular programs help break content into smaller, focused sections, allowing professionals to select the most relevant topics. Peer learning fosters a sense of community and shared purpose, enhancing the overall learning experience.

The advancement of digital technologies has made it easier to deliver engaging, interactive, and accessible CME/CPD programs. Healthcare professionals increasingly rely on smartphones, tablets, and computers to access learning materials. Mobile learning platforms provide content that can be accessed anytime, anywhere, making education convenient even for those with limited time. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) introduce immersive, hands-on experiences that allow clinicians to practice procedures and diagnoses in a controlled, risk-free setting. Digital platforms facilitate peer interaction, allowing healthcare professionals to discuss treatments, share questions, and stay updated on trends, creating a more social learning environment.

Making learning relevant to real-world practice is essential for engagement. CME and CPD programs should focus on current challenges and innovations, addressing issues clinicians face daily. Each session should provide practical tools, guidelines, and strategies that can be immediately applied in clinical settings. Multidisciplinary collaboration enriches CME/CPD by encouraging teamwork and shared learning across specialties. For example, programs designed for both doctors and nurses can improve communication and efficiency in healthcare settings.

Healthcare professionals often struggle with time constraints, making shorter, focused learning sessions more appealing. Breaking down learning into bite-sized segments allows for easier engagement and better retention. On-demand content enables clinicians to learn at their own pace, revisiting materials as needed. Using diverse formats, such as audio lectures,

infographics, and interactive charts, enhances comprehension and quick absorption of information.

Introducing a reward system can further motivate clinicians to engage with CME programs. Certificates, badges, or accredited credits provide tangible proof of participation and achievement, encouraging continued learning. Gamified elements, such as earning points, levels, and badges, add a competitive and fun aspect to learning, increasing motivation. Additional rewards, such as exclusive content or expert consultations, provide further incentives.

Gathering feedback and continuously improving CME/CPD programs ensures their relevance and effectiveness. Regular participant feedback helps refine program content, structure, and delivery, aligning them with clinicians' needs. Keeping CME and CPD programs updated with the latest medical research, best practices, and emerging health challenges ensures they remain impactful and useful.

GUIDELINES TO REFER FOR CONTINUING MEDICAL EDUCATION/CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There are several important guidelines and best practices to follow when designing, implementing, and evaluating CME/CPD programs.⁴⁻⁷ These guidelines ensure that educational activities are of high quality, ethical, scientifically rigorous, and effective in enhancing medical practice. The National Medical Commission "Ethics and Medical Registration Board" (EMRB) proposed The Registered Medical Practitioner (Professional Conduct) Regulations in 2022 for public opinion. Accreditation by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) in the US or equivalent bodies in other countries, such as the European Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (EACCME), and the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, guarantees that programs meet standards for educational quality and scientific accuracy.

CONCLUSION

Clinicians expect CME/CPD programs to be relevant, evidence-based, and applicable to their practice. They want educational content that directly addresses their daily clinical challenges, is presented by credible experts, and is free from bias. Flexibility, interactivity, and opportunities for networking and feedback are also

crucial to the overall learning experience. By meeting these expectations, CME/CPD providers can ensure that clinicians not only gain valuable knowledge but also enhance their ability to deliver the highest standard of patient care. CME and CPD are critical components of a healthcare professional's lifelong learning journey. Making these programs more interesting and engaging requires a shift toward interactive, personalized, and accessible formats. By incorporating technology, focusing on practical applications, providing engagement opportunities, and offering short, focused sessions, CME/CPD providers can create impactful learning experiences. Ultimately, improving CME/CPD benefits healthcare professionals by keeping them informed and motivated, while also enhancing patient care and healthcare outcomes. As the medical field continues to advance, continuing education must evolve accordingly to ensure clinicians remain proficient in the latest knowledge and best practices.

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