

E-learning – A heart failure nurse postgraduate e-programme in Spain

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An interdisciplinary approach where nurses participate in treatment optimization, individualized care plan, psychosocial support and education for patients and caregivers is of paramount importance for the patient's wellbeing. As a cardiologist specialized in heart failure I am well aware of the importance of nurses as an essential part of any comprehensive health care programme for heart failure patients.

This is why we started an online heart failure course for nurses a few years ago, allowing participation without the costs of travel and accommodation on-site. We wanted to provide an intensive and enjoyable heart failure training programme to enhance the nurses' role in the multidisciplinary heart failure team.

The course lasted six months and consisted of 21 topics divided into seven modules that included 350 hours of theoretical and practical case learning through online forum discussions. Problems in daily clinical practice were discussed with an interactive and very practical approach between students and teachers. Content was developed following the 'Heart Failure Association of the European Society of Cardiology heart failure nurse curriculum' by Riley et al.¹

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Completed studies were awarded 14 ECTS credits by the Francisco de Vitoria University in Madrid. The host institution was the Spanish Association of Cardiology Nurses (<https://campusaeec.com/producto/titulo-de-experto-en-insuficiencia-cardiaca-para-enfermeria-2da-edicion/>).

A key message from the participants of the course, and what makes us pursue this effort, is that all students would recommend the course to a colleague. Thus, we are already preparing the next one!

Paula Blanco Canosa (APRN)

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Paula took the course in its first edition (2011–2012) and says it has been very useful for her daily practice. She now is a teacher on the course.

How did you find the discipline to study?

Making a study plan early on is essential! The first day was devoted to the course content, which is helpful when making the plan. I also participated actively in the discussion forum every day and gave my opinion about the clinical cases or questions. On Fridays, or weekends..., I did the self-assessment test of each topic. It is advisable to 'save' a time slot each day for the course.

What were the best and the hardest parts of the programme?

There were many positive aspects. As it is entirely online this saved unnecessary trips, costs and losing work days. The online platform was user friendly and the technical support helpful. The discussion forum was attractive, with a photo of each participant, and encouraged interaction. The course was long and intense, but also fun, and provided a great interaction between different disciplines and the whole country. The most difficult part for me was technical topics, such as electrophysiology. However, I recognize that it was useful since many patients with heart failure have arrhythmias and/or devices that we need to know about.

You are now a teacher in the programme; how did that transition go?

The knowledge I acquired as a student and its implementation in my daily practice, as well as the scientific reading and to address patient-specific problems that I learned at the forum sessions, are key aspects. Being a teacher and sharing my knowledge and experience has been a very rewarding and motivating experience.

Reference

1. Riley JP, Astin F, Crespo-Leiro MG, et al. Heart Failure Association of the European Society of Cardiology heart failure nurse curriculum. *Eur J Heart Fail* 2016; 18: 736–743.