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THE IMPACT OF INTRODUCING VIRTUAL SLIDES AS A REPLACEMENT FOR POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS IN THE STUDENTS’ MICROSCOPY LABS

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Introduction/ Background
The medical school students in Timisoara, Romania have been studying pathology slides in microscopy labs according to a protocol which uses classical PowerPoint presentations as guides for understanding the microscopic features of diseases, followed by individual examination of the glass slides under the microscope.

Aims
We aimed to assess the impact of replacing those presentations with virtual slides (VS).

Methods
In the middle of the semester, for the benign tumors microscopy lab, which is presented over the course of 2 weeks, we used 3 VS, while the other 3 slides were presented in the classical PowerPoint manner. All attending students from the 3rd year of the Medical School of the University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Victor Babes” Timisoara were asked to fill out an anonymous questionnaire at the end of the lab, in which they graded the difficulty in identifying lesions, chose the best/least understood lesion and pointed out the best manner of presentation.

Results
431 valid questionnaires were collected. 52.9% of the students indicated one of the 3 VS as the best understood lesion, while 59.62% chose a different VS as a least understood one. One VS was also the top best (113/332 votes) while another the least understood (34/126 votes) lesion. 74.01% students agreed that VS helped them understand the microscopic criteria better, while 74.71% would like VS to be used in the labs to come.

Conclusion: VS were appreciated by the students as a novelty and a more impressing way of studying pathology slides, but did not dramatically improve the easiness with which they identify and understand the lesions.

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