

## EDITOR'S PAGE

# Elearning: the next step in ISCOS's worldwide education on comprehensive spinal cord management



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Dear *Spinal Cord* reader,

Amongst the goals of the International Spinal Cord Society are to advise, encourage, guide and support the efforts of those responsible for the education and training of medical professionals and professionals allied to medicine and when requested, correlate these activities throughout the world. ISCOS has initiated last year the learning program on comprehensive management of spinal cord lesion individuals and developed for all members of the management team. In this issue of SC the program is presented as well as the process of development. **E-learning** is associated with learning activities for which a computer is used in an interactive way, connected to a computer network. E-learning starts with the letter 'E' indicating an electronic component: internet and its technology. It is accepted to be an excellent way for distance learning, as it is time and place independent. The learning process can be individual and/or in groups. It offers development, use and testing of knowledge and skills and is very useful for broad education.

Many thanks are due to the education committee and the e-learning steering group and to the more than 300 specialists in all fields who have put energy and knowledge into this first part. Further development is under way with more aspects of comprehensive management being highlighted.

E-learning has advantages though also some concerns have been raised in literature. A real benefit is the 24/7 availability of the material, permitting saving on training time, travel and extra classrooms. Consistency makes the content identical for all users. Learning can be scheduled when most appropriate by the individual. Real time testing of the knowledge is possible. Practical information is easily made available. The quality of e-Learning programs depend on the way they are structured and on the content. Some may find learning on screen tiring. They need to have self-discipline and cognitive abilities for independent learning. A computer is mandatory. Studying in free time may not be popular for some so support by the organization is instrumental. The phenomenon of the 'ticking monkey' can be a threat: one just runs through the e-learning material but does not acquire knowledge properly.

We are in the 21st century and computer and cyber space and internet connections have become part of almost everyone's life, all over the world. Therefore E-Learning is just needed even if there are some possible shortcomings. I myself have found wandering through the different packages very interesting, and I can advise everyone to open [www.elearnSCI.org](http://www.elearnSCI.org) as soon as possible.

There is a very interesting editorial by Professor Harvey about quality of systematic reviews. Her critical remarks and worthwhile advice should be read. We hope that authors of future reviews will implement them and improve as such the value of their work.

There are very good contributions to be found in this issue of SC. Please look into the content list and you will be pleased to find again such outstanding works in different aspects of SCL management.

Enjoy reading and do not hesitate to contact us at [Spinalcord@uza.be](mailto:Spinalcord@uza.be).

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