

# PC program may help teach new surgeons

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New computer game technology can help educate otolaryngology medical students who don't have any anatomical knowledge or surgical experience, according to new research presented at the 2008 American Academy of Otolaryngology – Head and Neck Surgery Foundation (AAO-HNSF) Annual Meeting & OTO EXPO in Chicago, IL.

Using a computer simulator, researchers had a small pilot group perform a craniectomy from the squamosa of cadaveric temporal bone specimens using typical otologic surgical equipment. The goals of the pretest were to remove the bone, create straight lines along the edges of the craniectomy, and perform dural decompression without violating the dura. After performing this, the individuals then spent the next two weeks performing virtual temporal bone surgery on the OSC/OSU simulator. The individuals then performed the craniectomy a second time. A blinded observer (neurotologist) then assessed performance on the pre- and post-simulation tested bones.

After two weeks of practice on the computer, in all six sets of bones (12 bones total), the blinded observer was able to correctly determine which was the pre-simulation temporal bone and the post-simulation temporal bone. The researchers noted that their results are only relatable to temporal bone procedures, but have the potential to be replicated in other areas.

Findings from this research could help reduce cost of medical school training and help reduce surgical errors in patients.

Source: American Academy of Otolaryngology

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