

Videoconferencing: An effective way for residents/fellows in rural areas to attend essential courses

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Videoconferencing is a practical and effective way for residents/fellows in rural areas to attend practice-based learning courses and obtain continuing medical education (CME) credits, required by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME), without the cost and inconvenience of long distance travel, according to a study in the February issue of the *Journal of the American College of Radiology (JACR)*.

Practice-based learning courses are vital. They help residents/fellows investigate and evaluate their care of patients, appraise and assimilate scientific evidence, and to continuously improve patient care based on constant self-evaluation and life-long learning. Residents and fellows in [rural communities](#) frequently travel long distances for these courses, spending time away from their day-to-day activities and incurring travel costs, because there is often a shortage of teachers and attendees at small, rural medical centers. "Videoconferencing is a potential solution to this problem," said Kevin O'Regan, MD, lead author of the study.

"We evaluated the experience of radiology residents and local coordinators of a course delivered by videoconferencing to centers geographically separated from the main principal teaching site," said O'Regan. Twenty six second-year radiology residents and eight local coordinators participated at eight separate sites. "None of the participants felt that videoconferencing adversely affected their ability to

discuss topics with coordinators or residents at other sites. Satisfaction with the course content and method of delivery was high among participants. The course overall was rated as being very satisfactory by both residents and coordinators," he said.

"Videoconferencing in this setting removed the requirement for travel and the costs (financial and medical manpower) which would have been necessary had videoconferencing capability not been available. Perhaps most importantly, some would not have been able to participate in the course without videoconferencing," said O'Regan.

"The findings of this study demonstrate that the use of [videoconferencing](#) can enable successful completion of an education program for radiology trainees located at considerable distances from a main teaching site," he said.

Provided by American College of Radiology

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