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3-5 JULIO 2019

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Universidade de Vigo



Sociedad Española
de Parasitología

Pazo da Cultura de Pontevedra
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[163] Intervention to enhance medical parasitology knowledge at the University of Makeni, Sierra Leone

Antonio Peña-Fernández¹, Fernando Izquierdo Arias², Lucrecia Acosta³, Carolina Hurtado Marcos², Angela Magnet Dávila², Maria Berghs¹, Umar Anjum¹

¹ De Montfort University (UK).

² Universidad San Pablo CEU.

³ Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche.

In post-Ebola Sierra Leone, capacity building is critical to prevent future outbreaks, which should be informed by research influenced by good cultural and ethical practices. De Montfort University (DMU, UK) in collaboration with parasitologists from the Spanish Universities of San Pablo CEU and Miguel Hernández de Elche, is leading a project to build the research and teaching capabilities at University of Makeni (UniMak, Sierra Leone). As part of the project, a DMU academic visited UniMak for two weeks in April 2019 and provided sessions in basic parasitology, currently not taught in any programme. These sessions covered a basic introduction to medical parasitology and life-cycle, pathogenesis, detection, treatment, and prevention of: a) coccidian (*Cryptosporidium*, *Cyclospora*, and *Cystoisospora*); b) *Giardia intestinalis*, *Entamoeba*, and free-living amoebas; c) malaria and d) microsporidia. A theoretical session on the use of biological safety cabinets and common staining techniques was also provided. To facilitate the teaching and learning of these parasites, the novel resource DMU e-Parasitology was used, a package developed by the above participating universities and biomedical scientists from the UK National Health Service: <http://parasitology.dmu.ac.uk/index.htm>; which comprises four sections: theoretical with engaging e-learning units, a virtual laboratory, microscopy and case studies. To apply the knowledge learned during the sessions, volunteer UniMak students attended a final session in which they were asked to resolve the virtual clinical case studies available, specifically designed to enhance critical thinking and self-learning. Participants in this practical session (n=31) provided comprehensive feedback; a high percentage (96.8%) enjoyed the experience. All attendees highlighted they had gained appropriate knowledge of the studied parasitic diseases, including pathology, prevention, and treatment (12.9% agreed, 87.1% strongly agreed). 93.5% and 90.3% of students indicated, respectively, that the diagrams and mini-videos of parasitologists performing the detection techniques facilitated their learning. Finally, 93.5% indicated that the website enhanced their interest in the study of parasitology and would recommend a more comprehensive study of this science in their programmes. Our preliminary results have shown that the DMU e-Parasitology facilitates the introduction of basic medical parasitology in universities from developing countries with very little teaching and resources currently available for appropriate training.

Palabras clave: DMU e-Parasitology, teaching intervention, medical parasitology, Makeni.

