

## **PJ-C8.**

### **THE POSSIBLE USE OF THE INTERNET FOR THE TEACHING OF HISTOLOGY TO UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA STUDENTS**

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*Information Technology* (IT) plays an increasing role in many aspects of Medical and Dental health care including electronic patient recording, messaging, the sharing of all clinical data, trainee log-books, access to up-to-date information, evidence -based Medical & Dental practice, clinical decision support and audit. The teaching of IT skills and clinical information has now become an essential part of the under-graduate medical and dental courses in advanced countries. More and more Dental Schools in the UK use a computer-based teaching and problem- based learning modality. Those practicing in the National Health Service of Great Britain are also advised to have the necessary skills to further their knowledge of health informatics.

A developing county like Sri Lanka, and for that matter, all SAARC countries have the following common basic problems to varying degrees. These are: increasing student numbers, non availability of teaching slides, non availability of teaching material, non availability of trained teachers and in some schools even the lack of basic equipment such as microscopes, funds for expenses involved in purchasing microscopes, funds for expenses in service contracts and repairs including spare parts and also the lack of video conference projection facilities. In order to rectify these short comings a study was undertaken in order to see whether the Internet could be used for the purposes of teaching histology to the 2<sup>nd</sup> BDS students. This is now a very urgent requirement as we have a double batch of 154 students commencing their learning programmes from 8<sup>th</sup> November, 1999 for one full year.

Further, computers today are cheaper than binocular microscopes. Computer aided histology programmes, complementing microscope teaching, with computer aided learning using digitalized images and a "virtual microscope for every student even at home" is today a reality through the Internet. There are many available self teaching programmes in Histology. Some of these are also interactive and well structured. The Georgia Perimeter College, USA - Decatur Campus Biology 1405 Laboratory Human Tissue Programme and others, will be used to demonstrate the general tissue type, specific tissue name and the identification and labeling. The histological classification will also be shown eg. collagen fiber Type I, Type II, Type III including other tissues. Detailed histology of the cell, histology of nerve tissue, neurons, supporting cells (6 types) and basic concepts of neural integration together with the general description of normal lymph nodes, germinal follicles under higher power including tissue at varying magnifications are just two examples from the many that will be shown. This modality could be used for projection based single slide evaluation too.

In conclusion these programmes provide more self paced and self guided learning, make the course more student centred and provide more problem based learning.