History of balneology – a new way to teach using e-tools

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Abstract: E-tools communication becomes more and more important in our life. Even for teaching history of medicine or other different subjects it is recommended to use modern tools as web-pages, e-resources, data bases, interactive e-communication. It is well known that is very difficult to have enough resources to travel in other countries and have access to the historical documents and studying very old and treasure documents usually need special conditions, meaning the access is very limited. Using digitalization process and developing a platform mean in the same time to increase the accessibility to the documents and to provide more and more material based on reality and on all documents collected. This increasing accessibility means for the students time reducing spent for finding documents and also increased satisfaction related to history discovering and the possibility to create their own judgment.

Key Words: e-tools, history of balneology

1. Introduction

In a world haunted by restlessness and pressure, where moral and spiritual values are sometimes just utopia or idealism the step to discovery our own path might be returning to history, learning and understanding the real values that history reveals.

Balneo-climatology is a branch of medicine studying and applying into medical practice the therapeutically effect of natural factors. The most important factors are mineral waters of springs and lakes, mineral and peat mud, dried gas emanations and balneal resorts’ clime. Education in balneology bases on exploiting theoretical and practical knowledge and skills achieved during classes and on developing a medical thinking based also on previous experience. Balneology supposes a deep knowing and understanding historical evolution as an essential tool as the holistic approach of human being is compulsory.

During time achieving the “modern tools for research” meant to use the best resources can find at the moment and to study and process it in the most actual and efficient way at that moment, according to the study’s targets and aims.

Medical written papers in balneology increases in number and forms of presentation, as it is compulsory to create a better structure according to iatros and historical criteria as well as a better accessibility to documents and information.

2. History of balneology – a long evolution

One of the oldest medical discipline balneology and physiotherapy use natural factors and artificial physical agents. Using water, sun and air’s effects was a simple possibility to provide and protect health from the ancient time, as mentioned in: Corpus Hippocraticum or in Herodot’s and Plinius’s writings.

Roman and Greek organized the balneal therapy on in few balneal resorts as: Puteoli, Aachen, Plombieres Herculanum (in Danube- Carpathians’ territories) etc.

Also, the resorts were developed in other territory as ancient territories of Germany, France, Italy, Austria or Romania.

Unfortunately, the importance of balneal resorts decreased in the Middle Age according with two elements. One is the prohibition declared by church pretending the immorality of balneal treatment and techniques and the reality that balneal resorts became a source of epidemic spreading of diseases turned to thousands of deaths.

Balneal resorts recovered during 16th and 17th century. Then during Renaissance and Enlightenment balneal resorts developed and become modern as at the beginning of the 19th century brought the daily life implementation medically and socially.

Present days brings chemical analysis of mineral waters and observations regarding the indications, contraindications and effects of balneal treatment, also.
3. Challenges in educational web-pages developing containing Romanian documents

The results in medical history researches, especially balneology, were focused on designing a web site displaying Romanian documents related to balneology field as well as a short historical approach of the subject. The main information displayed on the web site is structured on the following stages:

- Pro-domo
- Balneology in ancient time and medieval age
- Balneology in Renaissance and Enlightenment
- Balneology in the 18th and 19th century
- Balneology in the 20th century
- Resources

This site addresses to students in medicine and physiotherapy and assures an important accessibility to historical knowledge and to the related documents.

Historical development of balneology went connected to new resorts opening and to older resorts development and modernisation process, as well as the balneology development as a medical science.

Our consideration about the future exploitation of the web site came from the aim to connect medical history information with the balneal resorts’ role and importance among large population as well as the role in professionals’ education. This perspective of web site exploitation is leading to the possibility of permanently updating and using the site in formal and non formal education.

Few examples about the content of our web-pages are presented in the next figure, containing the information about George Baiulescu and his activities in the field of balneology. He was not only a good organisator of medical activity of the beginning of the 20th century, but also an important personality involved in writing medical books in the field of public health and balneology. [1, 5, 6]
4. Why is necessary to implement a new approach of studying history of balneology?

Balneal therapy succeed to survive during time despite the technological progress and also to improve and divers the content with more and more specific indications and contraindications and to enrich the techniques with new procedures and applications.

Many educators in history of medicine fields believe that is unnecessary to develop a modern way of teaching history and web pages are related only with conferences and publications. [4, 7]

As was showed before it is possible to study history of medicine in an attractive way and to respect the scientific level of information in the same time. Increasing the level of students’ interest for historical and medical research in the same time should be achieved by the web design and contain and the quality and actuality of information displayed.

Using web pages in history of balneology have multiple applications and benefits as shown in the following figure:

5. Conclusions

In our life days balneology and climatology represent medical fields very much connected with human health, with multiple possibilities of prophylaxis and rehabilitation. Also, become very attractive for the tourism, with a huge potential of developing. During the last century the number of balneal resorts and mineral water sources reborn and have been exploited and balneal plumping and techniques increased in number and performance, creating an entire industry around.

Also in this time of speed and technology, using internet is more a modality of designing and developing marketing activities. [2]

Most of the balneal resorts have already included short historical presentations into their web pages. Using the Internet in medical activities has become a reality of the latest years, used not only for marketing, offering information for patients or for developing health promotion programmes but also for improving and disseminate medical education into large population.

Thinking of the large spectrum of fields of applying and using e communication, from practical telemedicine to e-medicine used as education tools it is obvious the high benefit of using e-communications and the ethical issues erased by sharing and exploiting e-information permanently into researchers sight.

As it is mentioned into EU documents: “Every European citizen should be equipped with the skills needed to live and work in the information society. eEurope proposes to connect all schools to the Internet,
to adapt school curricula and to train teachers to use
digital technologies”. [8]

Although in medicine field there still is a negative
attitude next to the possibility of using e-communication
tools for teaching activities it is remarkable the
possibility of designing electronic presentations and
videos for some subjects and then going further to create
interactive lectures into virtual space with the
contribution of several specialist teachers, as it is the
case of balneology and history of balneology.

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