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Beyond Paper Portfolio and E-portfolio: A Ubiquitous Portfolio System to Promote Contextualized Interactions Between Students and Preceptors During Clerkship

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Introduction: A clinical clerkship is a pivotal period for medical students to integrate knowledge, skills, and intangible competencies and apply them in real clinical contexts. A portfolio is known as a multipurpose tool that can enhance students' learning experiences during clerkship by facilitating the development of learning plans, exchange of feedback, stimulation of reflection, and implementation of performance assessments. An e-portfolio system should facilitate active student-preceptor interaction and extend students' learning experiences beyond the school or hospital.

Method: Inje University College of Medicine (IUCM) in Korea made a transition from a paper-based portfolio system for clinical clerkship to an e-portfolio system in 2015. During the transition, student and preceptor experiences with both systems were collected through surveys and semi-structured individual and focus group interviews. We conducted a thematic analysis using the ground theory analysis method. We also analyzed student-preceptor interactions during clerkship in an array of settings (e.g. ambulatory care unit, bedside teaching, basic clinical skill assessment and feedback, and case presentation).

Findings: To address the e-portfolio's most salient problems (delays in written feedback and the disturbance of real-time student-preceptor interactions), we developed a ubiquitous portfolio (u-portfolio) system that distributed various functions across multiple devices based on the different contexts of learning and interactions. Students used PCs for writing reports, learning plans, and reflection journals. Tablet PCs were used only in ambulatory care contexts for writing patients' medical records, presenting to preceptors, and receiving feedback. In-person real-time preceptor-student interactions were enforced by having students' smartphones be the sole device for feedback and assessment. Also, preceptors could check their own progress through the u-portfolio app.

Conclusion: We have developed and implemented the u-portfolio system for a 12-week internal medicine clerkship at 5 different IUCM-affiliated Paik Hospitals. Approximately 100 students and over 120 preceptors have successfully used the system in a 2-year period.