MEDICAL ENGLISH: THE KEY DIGITAL LEARNING TOOLS

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Summary. English proficiency is vital for the professionals of healthcare industry. By studying and practising medical English, healthcare professionals are able to make their patients feel more comfortable having better understanding of their needs, communicate with other medical staff who speak English, and grow professionally participating in international projects. The monitoring and comparative analysis of the internet resources reveals the main tools for digital learning of medical English to comprise online lessons, courses, podcasts and other websites for efficient learning and practice of English in the healthcare field.

Keywords: medical English; digital tools; language skills; internet resources; patients’ needs; healthcare professionals.

Introduction. English is the language most commonly spoken and written around the world, used across all countries and cultures, and that is also true for the online internet world. Great bulk of the world's medical and scientific literature is written in the English language. By being proficient in English, medical professionals can connect and cooperate with practitioners and researchers globally, give presentations at international conferences and practice throughout the world.

As international borders are becoming more accessible for working professionals, especially for experts in the healthcare field, the importance of English is also significantly increasing. English has become one of the common language of communication across nations in all scientific fields, including the field of medical science and healthcare [1].

Language has always been of utmost importance for the healthcare industry. With patients of different ages and nationalities flooding in every second, regardless of where the hospital or clinic is based, responding to their individual needs always
starts with communication. It also means a great deal for hospitals and clinics alike as the quality of their service heightens with good language skills of their employees [2].

However, many overseas doctors and nurses lack the medical English needed to retrain and gain employment [3]. Medical English is the language specific to healthcare, though it is aimed not to teach medical professionals how to give better care, but how to practise successfully in English.

Teaching English to medical professionals, requires a number of modifications in approach on the part of any teacher [4]. General English courses typically start with sets of grammar, vocabulary, and language skills, which are then contextualised so they make sense. Medical English is situation-based, the language is practical, and grammar, vocabulary and functional expressions are determined by the context. Content needs to be relevant to learners and delivered in such a way that they are able to learn and use it successfully. The internet offers a range of excellent resources to learn and practice medical English at a time and place to suit you.

Despite much attention being paid to different educational aspects [5; 6; 7; 8; 9], along with various medical and health care issues [10; 11; 12; 13], there is a necessity of a more thorough focus on key means of digital learning medical English, hence becoming the purpose of the article.

Main material. The monitoring and comparative analysis of the internet resources [3; 14; 15] reveals the main tools for digital learning of medical English to be as follows, incorporating online English lessons, courses, podcasts and other websites.

*English Health Train*. This is a free online medical course for studying advanced English for medicine. It is a unique, innovative curriculum aimed at improving the English communication skills, career potential, and confidence level of health professionals entering the health care field. The site is designed specifically for medical students, doctors and nurses who are studying or working in an English-speaking country. The course curriculum comprises five modules that cover different subjects of medical English, including medical careers, how to talk with patients and their families, talking with the coworkers. Inside every module is a set number of units. Each unit contains a listening, pronunciation, reading and vocabulary exercise, as well as a practical exercise that requires for using your medical English skills in a real-world setting.

*Health Check – BBC World Service*. The site offers a hand-picked selection of podcasts, documentaries, interviews and reporting on health issues and medical breakthroughs from around the world. The episodes cover a number of different topics, such as disease outbreaks in developing countries, the dangers of high blood pressure, and ways of improving the immune system. However, episodes only last for thirty days before the BBC removes them. The site is best suited for upper-intermediate and advanced students who are already able to follow news broadcasts relatively easily. BBC Health Check is great for anyone trying to stay current with events in medicine. It explores a wide range of health-related topics from all over the world and grapples with health issues on a global scale. The site investigates discoveries and solutions in healthcare and looks at how to deliver a healthier world. BBC Health Check bring you up to date with the latest relevant news and explores potential ways to solve the most hard-hitting problems in healthcare today.
**MedicalEnglish.** Here the focus is on medical English and English for healthcare as it is spoken and written by doctors, nurses, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians. It is a paid English for medicine course, which helps doctors, nurses and medical school students learn how to communicate in the medical industry. The program, which is intended for intermediate and advanced students, covers 20 topics, such as anatomy, mental health and dentistry. The course is comprehensive and includes a number of activities that test reading, writing, listening, speaking and vocabulary knowledge. It features both American and British English pronunciation. Students can study and complete assignments on their computer, smartphone and mobile device. Everyone who passes the course is given a certificate saying they have completed the MedicalEnglish.com program. That is a great boost to the CV of those looking for jobs in the field of healthcare.

**Instant Anatomy – iTunes.** Here you will find some free podcasts to download, aiding learning in human anatomy. The site provides various materials that go into detail about the different parts of the body. Here, you can learn English names for all the bones, organs, muscles and other parts of the body, as well as what each body part does. It is great for ESL students learning more about the human body, but it is designed with medical students in mind, not ESL students specifically. For this reason, it might be a little difficult for anyone who is not already an advanced English speaker. Along with downloading the podcast on iTunes, you can visit the Instant Anatomy website and download the notes for each lesson. Here, you can find detailed, labeled drawings of each part of the body covered in the episode.

**EnglishMed.** Doctors, nurses, pharmacists and general medical staff will welcome the opportunity to use EnglishMed, an invaluable resource designed especially for them. This is a comprehensive website that teaches general medical English for people working in healthcare, as well as advanced English for doctors and nurses. With EnglishMed, you get free reading, writing, speaking and listening exercises for: doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and general healthcare staff. There are other helpful interactive features on the website, so you can practice the skills you learn in each lesson. These include animated dialogues and activities to help with learning grammar and medical terms. Right on the start page of the site, visitors can choose the study area that best fits their specialization and move straight to the lessons, each one beginning with a typical medical dialogue. A cartoon, which can be viewed in full-size, offers listening practice and all medical terms and expressions used in the dialogue are fully explained. Following the dialogue are a number of exercises, which take the forms of gap filling, matching, multiple choice, etc. EnglishMed also features thousands of exercises and many hours of spoken conversations.

**Reading and Listening for Medical Workers – ManyThings.** The website covers special English programs that may be interesting to doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers. It is part of a professional ESL program called Interesting Things for ESL Students. Here, you can find podcasts and news articles covering different topics within medicine, such as how to be a doctor in the U.S., treatments for common diseases, vaccination issues, etc. While the podcast episodes do not focus on advanced medical English, like anatomy or scientific terminology, it is perfect for ESL students trying to learn general medical information. In addition, each episode comes with a script that you can read as you follow along.
TEDMED Talks. TEDMED is an annual conference focusing on health and medicine, with a year-round web-based community. Talks given at TEDMED combine the nexus of health, information and technology with compelling personal stories and a glimpse into the future of healthcare. Try watching these talks to improve your English listening comprehension and vocabulary. They are full of useful or inspiring ideas. Many of their talks are about the practice of medicine. They raise good questions to think about while working on your English. The intent of the conference has been described as a gathering of geniuses that brings together some of the most innovative, thoughtful pioneers of healthcare technology, media, and entertainment to learn from one another and mix people up from different disciplines and industries to solve big problems in healthcare.

Surgery 101. This is a series of podcasts designed to help people learn about the basics of surgery, explain the different types of surgery and how they are performed. The website features a range of educational podcasts and videos, and there is also a Surgery 101 app and a YouTube channel. Each episode covers a single topic in 10-15 minutes so that learners can quickly grasp the basic concepts relating to a common surgical problem. They are presented in a way that both medical students and non-medical students can both benefit from. Learning objectives are provided for each episode concluding with several key points to summarize the topic. The podcast episodes are separated into categories based on the type of surgical method. Explore the website using the search bar above or clicking through the drop down menus to find topics that interest you. Each podcast category has a picture that makes it easy to understand.

Medical Terminology Systems. It is meant to provide an easy and quick way to learn the basic medical terminology. This is a podcast for medical students that talks about the different types of systems in the body, as well what they do and what their names mean in basic English. Here you can learn about topics like the digestive system, the nervous system and the reproductive system in English. In addition, you will notice that the Medical Terminology System's podcast is made to complement the Medical Terminology Systems textbook. It is important to note that you do not need this textbook to benefit from the podcast. The podcast helps you learn how to pronounce and memorize different systems in the body so that you are able to talk about them without using the advanced medical terms. It creates an immersive, multimedia experience that tracks your progress until you have mastered the language of medicine and healthcare.

Conclusions. It is possible to conclude that the English is one of the important languages of the healthcare industry. The demand for bilingual health professionals is one of the highest across the sector. Healthcare providers should know how to understand their patients in their language, to give better and immediate treatment. They are better able to serve their patients when they can communicate with them in their native language. By studying and practising medical English, healthcare professionals will be able to make their patients feel more comfortable, and have a better understanding of their needs. They will also learn to communicate with other medical staff who speak English. It is important to grow professionally, participate in international research projects and English is the medium of most of the events. Learning medicine might not be easy, but the above resources and a little practice
every day, can be of great help in learning how to talk about it in proper medical English.

References: