

## **Integrating the Bovine Rectal Palpation Simulator into a veterinary curriculum. Student feedback: Part 1 - immediately after the initial training session**

S Baillie, D J Mellor, S Brewster and S W J Reid

*Department of Computing Science and Department of Comparative Epidemiology and Informatics, Institute of Comparative Medicine, Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Glasgow, Glasgow. UK*

**Background:** A virtual reality based teaching tool, the Bovine Rectal Palpation Simulator, has been developed using haptic (touch feedback) technology for training veterinary students. The simulator project was initiated because it is increasingly difficult to ensure all students develop adequate skills by graduation using traditional training methods.

**Summary of work:** Teaching with the simulator was introduced into the fourth year course at the University of Glasgow Veterinary School. During training each student was instructed in the procedures of bovine rectal palpation and basic pregnancy diagnosis while palpating virtual reproductive tracts. Students completed questionnaires immediately after the training session.

**Summary of results:** Ninety-four students attended the training and 69 questionnaires were returned. All students who responded considered that haptic training had been helpful for learning bovine rectal palpation and 97% reported increased confidence. The feedback also indicated that the simulator had helped students develop a search strategy, orientate in three-dimensions and increase knowledge of the feel of key structures.

**Conclusion:** The simulator has potential as a useful means of supplementing existing training methods, providing a safe, flexible and accessible learning environment. Further teaching sessions are being made available to students and additional feedback will be gathered after examinations of cows.

Short presentation at: Association for Medical Education Europe (AMEE) conference September 2004, Edinburgh, UK.