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ASPET Launches Automated Patient-Oriented Problem-Solving Learning Tool

A-POPS Offers Students Team-Based Learning, Pharmacology Principles and Problem-Solving

ROCKVILLE, MD — [The American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics](#) (ASPET) has automated its [Automated Patient-Oriented Problem-Solving \(A-POPS\)](#) learning tool. The updated A-POPS workshops are now available as an online app. Students exchange information, work together to formulate effective solutions and can attend workshops anytime, anywhere. The platform offers a series of exercises designed to be used in small group meeting sessions to supplement the teaching of pharmacology to students in health professions.

ASPET is launching the [A-POPS](#) as the new school year gets underway. Currently, instructors can access five workshops, including:

- Treatment of Essential Hypertension (HTN)
- Therapy of Diabetes Mellitus (TDM)
- Drug Treatment of Heart Failure (CHF)
- Pharmacokinetics Applied to the Treatment of Asthma (PKA)
- Chemotherapeutic Challenges (CCH)

“ASPET is excited to lead this effort that encourages students to learn pharmacology in a different and more interactive way. We hope instructors and students take advantage of this new opportunity,” said ASPET Executive Officer Dave Jackson.

ASPET partnered with [DeckChair Learning Systems, Inc.](#) to automate the exercises through online modules that are compatible with learning management systems. Dr. Mark Simmons, pharmaceutical sciences professor at the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, worked with Dr. Jeff Graham at the University of Toronto and Allan Sura of DeckChair Learning to create the system that includes a pretest, posttest and a mechanism for measuring learner achievement.

A-POPS streamlines the process, allows students to meet remotely or in person, sets groups to run simultaneously or asynchronously and eliminates the need to schedule breakout rooms or distribute handouts.

“The A-POPS don’t just present the text, but guide students as a group through pharmacology-centered clinical cases using peer instruction,” Simmons pointed out. “The opportunity for students to serve in various roles and gain leadership experience is also an important feature,” he added.

To assist students in learning through A-POPS, the instructor assigns students into groups of four. Within a group, each student is assigned one of four unique License Keys for their role as either Student 1, Student 2, Student 3, or Student 4. Each student takes a turn leading the group discussion to solve the problems posed during the four clinical episodes of the workshop. Each exercise can be modified for larger or smaller groups as needed.

During the group meeting, the students start with the Pretest Group Review, proceed to the four episodes and finish up with a Group Pop Quiz. In each episode, only one of the students has the information related to that episode and serves as a discussion leader. After the group meeting, a posttest becomes available.

The exercises within *The POPS System in Pharmacology* were originally designed as sets of PDFs that the instructor organized and distributed. The PDFs are still available for ASPET members. The new system provides flexibility for an easier process for the students to learn and instructors to teach pharmacology concepts. A brief [video](#) provides an overview of the A-POPS Pharmacology Workshops Online. A-POPS workshops are available to the entire pharmacology community.

The A-POPS are written by pharmacologists and have been peer reviewed by both a basic scientist and a clinician. They provide a structured format for active learning of specific topics in pharmacology.

About ASPET

The American Society for Pharmacology and Experimental Therapeutics (ASPET) is an international, 4,000-member scientific society whose members conduct basic and clinical pharmacological research in academia, industry, and the government. Members’ research efforts help develop new medicines and therapeutic agents to fight existing and emerging diseases. ASPET supports 10 divisions, each of which is governed by an Executive Committee. ASPET members have access to all journal content. The ASPET office is in Rockville, Md. Visit aspet.org to learn more.

About DeckChair Learning

[DeckChair Learning Systems Inc.](#) is a unique Ontario corporation founded by pioneers in computer-supported learning to commercialize advances in teaching and assessment techniques developed at The University of Toronto. Their past commercial successes include developing an [interactive software program](#) for Cengage Learning that has been a top international seller for more than two decades. It is now available on the Mac and Windows app stores. DeckChair opened its doors in 2007.