

COURSE-SOURCE WINS 2006 NATIONAL TRAINING AWARD FOR PIONEERING BLOOD TRANSFUSION TRAINING

SUMMARY

Industry

National Health Service

Client

TACTICS: Training, Assessment and Competency in Trent Intra-operative Cell Salvage

The Challenge

To initiate a pilot training course instructing hospital staff in the theory and practice of an alternative blood transfusion method called Intra-operative Cell salvage (ICS) so that too often unused ICS machinery could be put into regular use.

The Solution

Cut conventional classroom training time and costs by partnering with Course-Source to deliver a pilot e-learning training programme providing the basic theory and practice behind ICS. Allow medics access to the course at their own pace. Provide a learning management system to allow administrators to track and record progress.

The Benefits

The TACTICS online training was such a huge success that the course has subsequently become part of the NHS national transfusion learning portfolio. Hundreds of medics in hospitals in the East Midlands were trained to use ICS during the course of the pilot and 200 new, national users registered in 2007. Users are now registering at the rate of one a day. Potential savings to the NHS run into £millions.



“ Course-Source is delighted to win a National Training Award for this project. I am sure the judges recognised the way in which our training has improved skills, cut costs and, most importantly, saved lives. No training provider could wish for a better return on investment. ”

Ken Wood, Founder and Director, Course-Source.

With increasing restrictions imposed upon volunteer blood donors in the interests of blood safety and with the public more aware of the potential risks of receiving a blood transfusion, it is little wonder that both clinicians and patients are keen to explore viable alternatives to conventional allogeneic or donor blood transfusions.

In hospitals in Trent and Leicester, Course-Source provided the software for a ground-breaking, and what turned out to be an award-winning pilot project training hospital staff in one alternative to donor blood transfusion - Intra-operative Cell Salvage (ICS). This technique recycles a patient's own blood for use during operations, avoiding the need for a transfusion.

“The technique has clear advantages,” explains Dr Hafiz Qureshi, Consultant Haematologist at University Hospitals Leicester. “It involves giving patients their own, fresh blood, with no limit on how much blood you can salvage or return. You can use the technique for a wide range of surgical procedures and it eliminates the need to store blood before it is transfused. The proposed National Blood Conservation Strategy recommends Intra-operative Cell Salvage as the preferred autologous transfusion technique for very good reasons.”

The project was initiated and is overseen by a regional committee called TACTICS (Training, Assessment and Competency in Trent Intra-operative Cell Salvage), who accepted a brief to raise

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THE ELECTRONIC PULSE SUSTAINING ONLINE BLOOD TRANSFUSION

“After taking the e-learning section of training, learners move on to a classroom course for practical experience ... then practise on a dummy...before a supervised session in the operating theatre and final practice certification. Course-Source provides the first steps on that very important journey.”



Laurence Wilson, TACTICS Board Member and Course-Source e-learning consultant.

awareness of the method, roll out training and, ultimately, create a best practice blueprint to train potentially thousands of hospital staff within the NHS nationally.

“Training was central to the whole project, obviously,” says Hafiz Qureshi. “The problem was how to train the large numbers of healthcare staff without compromising theatre schedules and hence waiting lists. It was obvious that conventional classroom training would be impractical and that we needed to look at alternatives.”

Laurence Wilson sits on the TACTICS board and is a corporate trainer and e-learning consultant with Course-Source. Significantly, Laurence is also Chairman of the Hospital Liaison Committee for Jehovah’s Witnesses in Leicester. As the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ faith forbids acceptance of donor blood transfusions, Laurence was especially keen to promote information concerning transfusion alternatives and volunteered to take responsibility for devising the pilot training course, for medical staff at University Hospital Leicester, the Derby City Hospital, Queen’s Medical Centre Nottingham, the Sheffield Children’s Hospital and Sheffield Main Hospital.

“Patrick Musto, Consultant Anaesthetist at University Hospital Leicester came up with the idea of providing training about the background and theoretical practice of ICS via an e-learning course,” explains Laurence Wilson. “It was an obvious solution and I was more than happy to bring my expertise to the project, converting material from classroom training exercises, books and workshops into an on-line training course. Then it was up to others at Course-

Source to provide the technology to put it all online and build the essential Learning Management System to evaluate usage and results.”

As TACTICS member Jo Lamb, Consultant Anaesthetist at Queen’s Medical Centre, Nottingham says: -

“As a pilot project, testing a course for potentially thousands of people, we needed to know who was using the system and assess how much their knowledge improved as a result. A managed learning system was also crucial for legal and insurance reasons.”

“As Course-Source had proven itself able to work within the NHS on the NHS ECDL e-learning programme with 180,000 users,” explains Laurence, “everyone thought it made sense to approach them to develop similar software for this project.”

The Course-Source platform, the electronic pulse underpinning the whole training process, enabled all five hospitals in the pilot scheme to understand and benefit from the Intra-operative Cell Salvage alternative to donor blood transfusion, while handling the essential administrative requirements.

The pilot was a tremendous success. The Course-Source platform provided the first steps on the very important journey of getting hospital staff into the operating theatre working with ICS equipment, after which participants moved on to a classroom course for practical experience of how the Intra-operative Cell Salvage machine works. They then practiced on a dummy in a state of the art simulation centre in Nottingham, before a supervised

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hands on session in the operating theatre and final practice certification.

Feedback on the e-learning part of the course was mostly on the construction and content of the course, rather than the Learning Management System, because that was invisible to most people. Yet Laurence insists the platform proved invaluable because it is what he calls a 'light' rather than a 'heavy' system.

"With the heavier systems some larger LMS providers use, you're buying a suite of applications and a whole computer programme to manage everything – linking into payroll and HR systems, enterprise and resource planning systems and so on, with costs that can exceed £200,000," he explains. "The Health Service already had HR systems and can't afford that kind of money! Course-Source was able to deliver the essentials of a Learning Management System – the necessary tracking and the ability to handle large numbers of people. It delivered the essentials of roll-out and analysis progress without heavy costs."

"Course-Source were very helpful throughout the project," adds Jo Lamb. "They understood our aims and were keen to help us promote the course."

Significantly, the pilot was recognised as being highly successful by UK Blood and Tissue Transplant Services which adopted the course for nationwide roll-out. 200 users registered in 2007 and registration is continuing now at the rate of one a day. The e-learning course is free of charge to NHS staff and provides them with a certificate upon completion.

Not only does the national roll-out have clear, life-saving benefits, it is also proving to be a remarkable way of saving money within the NHS. In one hospital alone during the three-month pilot, using ICS equipment saved 450 donor blood units, a cost equivalent of £20,000. This is before the cost of collecting, screening, storing and transfusing donor blood is taken into account, or before assessing the costs of treating problems arising after donor blood transfusions. Potentially, regular, national use of ICS could save the NHS many millions of pounds in coming years.

"Too few people know about these alternatives to conventional blood transfusion, yet it's imperative that health care professionals are educated in this field because of potential blood shortage problems and the need to implement blood conservation strategies," says Laurence Wilson. "We at Course-Source helped get that message across and train people up to use a workable, alternative solution. I think we made a great team and we were delighted to win a 2006 National Training Award with this project."

“The Course-Source platform was a tremendous success, enabling all five hospitals in the pilot scheme to understand and benefit from ICS while handling administrative requirements”

Laurence Wilson
TACTICS board member



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