



Clinical Decision Support Systems (CDSS): Teaching Specialty Areas of Medicine Without the Specialist

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Challenge:
How do you provide adequate teaching in specialty medicine with minimal access to specialists who hold the knowledge?

Solution:
Implement a new program where non-specialty educators have the ability to teach specialty areas of medicine.

Situation:

- Typically, training in “specialty medicine” such as dermatology is limited to 1–2 days during a 4-year medical curriculum.
- Internists consider themselves mediocre in dermatology, a 2.6 on a scale of 1–5. However, this does not change the number of patients they see and treat for skin disease.
- Dermatologists are focused on training dermatology residents and are rarely available for internal medicine education.
- The AMA, AAMC, and ACGME have all generated new curriculum goals and competencies, placing CDSS as a key directive in helping to improve efficiency and quality of care.

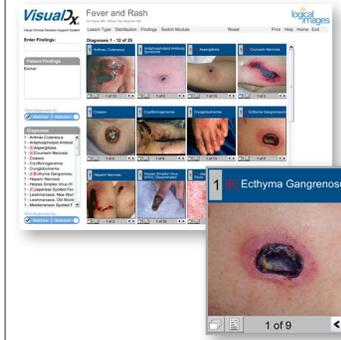
Strategy:

Develop and implement a “dermatology walk rounds” program that combines skill development in:

- Pattern recognition
- Differential diagnosis
- Diagnostic reasoning
- Skin morphology description
- Decision support utilization

This combination of skill sets allows the institution to yield the most effective and diagnostically accurate learning environment.

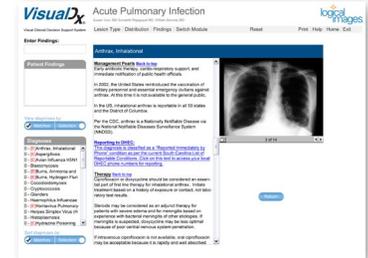
Advantages to Computer-Based Learning with a CDSS



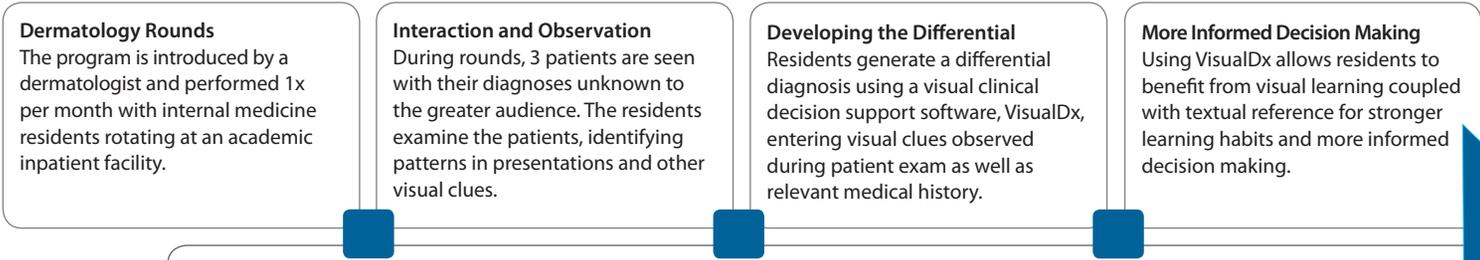
VisualDx presents each condition visually, including variation in presentation due to severity, age, and skin type.

With VisualDx, the user enters specific findings based on the patient evaluation. Each entry allows the system to refine the differential, leading with those conditions most relevant to your patient’s findings.

Internet-based application gives you access anytime, anywhere and allows real-time content additions and updates.



Method: Integrated Dermatology Walk Rounds



Our Goal:
Improve dermatology pattern recognition among internal medicine trainees, leading to improved physician confidence, diagnostic accuracy, and patient care.

Teaching Specialty Medicine Without the Specialist
The internal medicine academician becomes well rehearsed in basic morphology through the use of an interactive morphology tutorial and then leads rounds moving forward, thus allowing the internal medicine educators to teach specialty medicine without having the specialist available.

1 Kirsner RS, Federman DG. Lack of correlation between internists’ ability in dermatology and their patterns of treating patients with skin disease. *Arch Dermatol.* 1996 Sep; 132(9):1043-6.

* Art Papier MD is the chief scientific officer and founder of Logical Images, Inc., the creators of VisualDx.