An e-Learning program dedicated to Rare Eye Diseases in Europe, an ERN-EYE initiative

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Acknowledgement
ERN-EYE is co-funded by the European Union (DG Sante) and by Les Hôpitaux Universitaires de Strasbourg.

ERN-EYE in brief
Launched in March 2017 concomitantly with 23 other European Reference Networks (ERNs), ERN-EYE is a highly specialized network dedicated to Rare Eye Diseases (RED) and is constituted by 23 Healthcare Providers (HCPs) in 13 European Member States. RED encompasses more than 900 diseases identified in the Orphanet database and ERN-EYE members organized themselves in four major Clinical Working Groups: Retinal diseases RED, Neuro-ophthalmology RED, Paediatric RED and anterior segment RED.

Summary – Purpose of the project
One of the major goals of our ERN is to promote and develop the knowledge within the network.

The program aims to involve today’s most renowned experts across the EU and also internationally in addition to an e-learning module for all the ERN members. In this context two different types of e-learning projects are planned within ERN-EYE: independent e-Learning modules for general public or non-specialists and one complete course on RED for professionals/care givers who want to improve their knowledge in RED. For the course for professionals, the choice of eLearning modules allows us to adapt to geographical constraints (all our members and affiliated partners countries have to have access), time constraints (E-Learning is accessible 7/7, 24/24 for asynchronous sessions and synchronous session available everywhere; no need to dedicate whole days) and cost constraints (no travels required for all students, use of the available tools at the best).

2 different objectives
2 different eLearning programs

- General learning videos
  - General Public & Patients
  - Five access
  - Analysis of the needs before each module
- Complete eLearning e-learning program
  - RED specialists
  - Regulated access
  - Analysis of the needs based on the ERN-EYE survey months
- Official recognition (Academic validation – Strasbourg University)
- Establishment of educational program dedicated to Rare Eye Diseases
- Accessible to all European professionals
- With most renowned expert for Europeans Countries

The steps of the conception of the program

Conception: 4 modules for Rare Eye Diseases
Because the field is extremely broad for clinical and scientific research, ERN-EYE is launching an eLearning program to provide a wide access to knowledge in the field including the basic clinical and scientific background as well as the cutting edge up to date research and therapy developments.

First module

- Inherited Retinal Diseases (available this year)*
- Anterior Segment Diseases (coming next year)
- Neuro-ophthalmology (coming next year)
- Rare Diseases Care in an European environment, challenges and opportunities (coming next year)

The program is under validation within ERN-EYE working groups

Learning Management System DigitalUni
- Online courses
- Synchronous sessions
- Clinical cases analysis
- Resources to consult
- Bottoms up sessions
- Small groups work
- Evaluations
- Virtual classrooms

Conclusion
We anticipate that this eLearning program will enable all ERN-EYE members to share their expertise more easily across Europe for sharing their knowledge and thus improve RED-affected patient care. The first module dedicated to inherited retinal diseases, available this year will be followed by the Anterior segment and the Neuro-ophthalmology modules.