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Combining Physical and Virtual Contexts through Augmented Reality: Design and Evaluation of a prototype using drug box as marker for antibiotics' training.

Introduction Antimicrobial resistance is a global health issue. Studies have shown that improved antibiotic prescription education among healthcare professionals reduces mistakes during the antibiotic prescription process. The aim of this study was to investigate novel educational approaches that through the use of Augmented Reality technology could make use of the real physical context and thereby enrich the educational process of antibiotics prescription. The objective is to investigate which type of information related to antibiotics could be used in an augmented reality application for antibiotics education. Methods This study followed the Design Based Research Methodology composed of the following main steps: problem analysis, investigation of information that should be visualized for the training session and finally the involvement of the end users the development and evaluation processes of the prototype. Results Two of the most important aspects in antibiotics' prescription processes, to represent in an augmented reality application, are the antibiotic guidelines and the side effects. Moreover, this study showed how this information could be visualized from a mobile device using an Augmented Reality scanner and antibiotic drug boxes as markers. Discussion In this study we investigated the usage of objects from a real physical context such as drug boxes and how they could be used as educational resources. The logical next steps are to examine how this approach of combining physical and virtual contexts through Augmented Reality applications could contribute to the improvement of competencies among healthcare professionals and its impact on the decrease of antibiotics resistance.

1 **Combining Physical and Virtual Contexts through Augmented**
2 **Reality: Design and Evaluation of a prototype using drug box as**
3 **marker for antibiotics' training**

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11 Abstract

12 Introduction

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14 prescription education among healthcare professionals reduces mistakes during the antibiotic
15 prescription process. The aim of this study was to investigate novel educational approaches that
16 through the use of Augmented Reality technology could make use of the real physical context and
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19 for antibiotics education.

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24 the prototype.

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27 augmented reality application, are the antibiotic guidelines and the side effects. Moreover, this
28 study showed how this information could be visualized from a mobile device using an
29 Augmented Reality scanner and antibiotic drug boxes as markers.

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32 and how they could be used as educational resources. The logical next steps are to examine how
33 this approach of combining physical and virtual contexts through Augmented Reality applications
34 could contribute to the improvement of competencies among healthcare professionals and its
35 impact on the decrease of antibiotics resistance..

36 *Keywords: Antimicrobial resistance, antibiotics, augmented reality, mobile learning.*

37 **Introduction**

38 **Antibiotic Resistance is a global health challenge**

39 The widespread inappropriate use of antibiotics provoked the manifestation of antibiotic
40 resistance organisms. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the biggest public health
41 challenges [1]. The effectiveness of the antibiotics is decreasing and resistance to antimicrobial
42 therapies is rising, thereby leading to an increase of morbidity, mortality and health care
43 expenditure [2]. In particular, while globalization plays a key role in increasing the vulnerability
44 of all of the countries around the world, resistance remains a global public health threat, and
45 individual actions cannot protect the health of its population against it [3]. While examining the
46 causes of antibiotic resistance, a complex and insufficient mechanism can be observed, which
47 includes human behavior and the different levels of society. As a result, the consequences affect
48 everybody in the world [3]. We could possibly refer to some similarities of this phenomenon with
49 the climate change. Until now, a significant amount of researches have been conducted in order to
50 describe the different facets of antibiotic resistance and to document the interventions needed to
51 meet the challenge, even though a large scale of coordinated actions is absent [2]. It is a common
52 assumption that without antibiotics, a list of achievements in modern medicine, for instance
53 major surgery, treatment of preterm babies and cancer chemotherapy, could not exist without
54 bacteria's infection effective treatment and it could be argued that in a few years we might be
55 faced with dire setbacks on many levels and areas, such as medically, socially and financially [4].

56 **Educational strategies**

57 There are efforts being made widely around the world between cultures and regions on
58 multifaceted and multilevel interventions that defy local barriers and beliefs. Recently reviewed
59 educational strategies indicate the essential role of education of health-care workers, laboratory
60 staff and the public on appropriate antibiotic use and antimicrobial resistance [5]. Defining the
61 complexity of the antimicrobial resistance phenomenon, education alone might not be powerful
62 enough as an intervention but it could generate knowledge, which could be essential for health-
63 care professionals to understand and contend the resistance control systems [5]. In order to puzzle
64 out this complex problem, information needs to be clarified by policy makers about antibiotic and
65 its effect on public health [6]. Drug Resistance Index Social (DRIS), educational and awareness
66 campaigns for the public population could also possibly generate an understanding that can
67 support the prescriber withhold antibiotics [7]. It has been observed that these campaigns could
68 contribute to more careful use of antibiotics.

69 **Augmented Reality**

70 Augmented Reality (AR) is a technology that provides the opportunity for computer-generated
71 virtual imagery information to be overlaid onto a live directly or in-directly real world
72 environment in real time [8]. AR bridges the gap between the real and the virtual in a seamless
73 way [9]. Moreover, Augmented Reality compliments the real environment and does not replace it
74 as virtual reality applications do [8].

75 However, AR applications are not yet being used on a large scale in the educational
76 system [10]. Although Augmented Reality is not new, the dynamics in the field of education have
77 only been explored recently. Unlike other technologies in computer science, augmented reality
78 interfaces provide the user with interaction features between the real and the virtual world, a
79 tangible interface transformation and tools for the transition from the real to the virtual world
80 [11]. It is, however, the teachers' responsibility to cooperate with researchers in this field in order
81 to explore how the features of augmented reality can be implemented in the best way in an
82 educational environment [12]. These applications could be used through mobile devices, but it
83 would be more practical and effective to be conducted with the usage of digital scanners in order
84 to promote the collective process and to set up a direct communication between instructors and
85 trainees [13]. Nevertheless, the dynamic characteristics of Augmented Reality technology should
86 be carefully analyzed in order for their transition into educational efficiency to be feasible.

87 In the 2010 and 2011 Horizon reports augmented reality has been mentioned as a promising
88 technology for education. According to Carolien Kamphuis [14] augmented reality as part of
89 educational technology is promising for delivering meaningful learning. Moreover, it should be
90 mentioned that AR technology provides also organizational advantages such as (i) a training
91 environment that is almost the same with the professional work environment, (ii) collaboration
92 between users will support authentic learning, (iii) real time interactive feature of AR provides
93 immediate feedback to the user, (iv) experts or instructors are not always necessary to observe
94 trainees performance, (v) situated learning: "Just in time" and "Just in place".

95 A number of studies were found for augmented reality in medical education and more specifically
96 AR training systems for medical learning tasks such as visualizing parts of human body and
97 laparoscopy training session with augmented reality. These studies trying to explore the dynamics
98 of augmented reality for complex learning domains in medical education.

99 Another study from Zu et al [15] performed an integrative review for augmented reality in
100 healthcare education. The results from this study indicate the acceptance of AR systems as
101 learning technology tool in healthcare education. There is no empirical study though; to support
102 this claim and showing how exactly augmented reality improves effectively the training skills of
103 the trainees.

104 **Aim**

105 Antibiotics have been considered as a determining factor for saving lives and minimizing the
106 suffering of patients for more than sixty years. The widespread inappropriate use of antibiotics
107 provoked the manifestation of antibiotic resistance organisms. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)
108 is one of the biggest public health challenges [16]. Previous studies [17],[18],[19],[20] have
109 shown that combining educational methods and intervention strategies to general
110 practitioners can reduce the antibiotics prescription in the range between 3% and 12% [19],[20].
111 Developing effective educational methods in the healthcare workers' context could therefore
112 further lower unnecessary prescriptions which lead to prescription errors and are considered to
113 be one of the critical factors for the antimicrobial resistance global health issue. Educational
114 technology interventions can support the decrease of prescription errors among healthcare
115 professionals.

116 Therefore the aim of this study is to investigate how the visualization of information in
117 medication boxes from an AR scanner aiming to support antibiotics prescription education.

118 **Method**

119 A design based research approach was applied and consisted of four connected phases [21]:

- 120 • Analysis
- 121 • Development of solutions
- 122 • Iterative cycles of testing
- 123 • Production of design principles

124 The approach of this study is based on the principles and the basic structure of building
125 applications for educational purposes. This research approach is being used widely in education
126 since it investigates the innovation with the usage of technology-based initiatives because
127 according to Kelly et al. it [22] “embraces the complexity of learning and teaching and adopts
128 interventionist and iterative posture toward it”. According to Reeves, [23] some of the key
129 elements include the addressing of complex problems in collaboration with
130 practitioners, integrating design principles with new technologies to develop practical solutions to
131 the problem and conducting effective evaluations to refine the proposed solution and
132 identify new design principles.

133 **Analysis**

134 According to Herrington, 2010 [24] the analysis phase addresses three key areas: The detection of
135 the problem, the literature review and the practitioner's experience. The targeted goal in the
136 analysis phase is to identify the problem and investigate what has already been done in the same
137 or related fields.

138 The problem as it has been set in the introduction is antimicrobial resistance. Since this global
139 health issue is very complex, combining several scientific and social areas, this project focused
140 on the educational structures governing this area. Different explorative methods had been used

141 for mapping the educational field of antibiotics. For this purpose a web survey consisting of 15
142 questions was used in this study. This web survey was not based to any specific standard of
143 surveys since it was the first phase of approaching the researched area, and its goal was to explore
144 information regarding the antibiotic educational process, the prescription process in hospitals, the
145 private prescription process, possible training sessions for antibiotic education and courses in
146 medical schools which are important for the participants for antibiotic knowledge. Eight resident
147 doctors and two registrar doctors participated in this study. All of them were working within the
148 Stockholm area in Public Hospitals. The recruitment was based on an open announcement in
149 Södertälje Hospital in Stockholm, Sweden. With this survey the practitioner's experience
150 regarding the educational experiences they had in antibiotics as well as the tools that they are
151 using now when they are prescribing antibiotics to people were explored. Since the design
152 research approach focuses on the knowledge of the practitioners and seeks to use their insights on
153 the research and design and thereby providing potential solutions to the educational process, the
154 collection of these data was critical for this study.

155 In parallel with the web survey, a literature review was conducted in order to explore information
156 regarding the educational area of antibiotics, as well as to examine which technology could
157 possibly be useful to support the educational process and enrich the educational experiences. This
158 process also supported the study by providing information from other researches in similar areas.
159 Moreover, the literature review supported the exploration of researches in the technological
160 educational tools. More specifically, it focused on researches whose main academic interest is
161 mobile educational tools and augmented reality in the field of education.

162 For the literature review different databases have been used according to different science fields.
163 Karolinska's Institute e-library databases (PubMed, Web of Science, CINAHL) have been
164 used for medical and healthcare material. More specifically, researches in the field of
165 antimicrobial resistance, antibiotics, antibiotic education, public health, educational tools in
166 antibiotic education, antibiotic guidelines, antibiotic policies, virtual patients in antibiotic
167 education, clinical pharmacology. For the technological material, Stockholm's University e-
168 library databases have been used (IEEE, Scopus). A significant number of papers were found in
169 the fields of mobile, mobile educational tools, augmented reality, mixed reality, augmented
170 reality and education, mixed reality and education, augmented reality integration, augmented
171 reality and data collection, contextual learning, ubiquitous learning.

172 **Development of solutions**

173 Following the study of Herrington et al. [48] a more targeted literature review was conducted
174 together with relevant theories, existing frameworks and design principles. The solution process

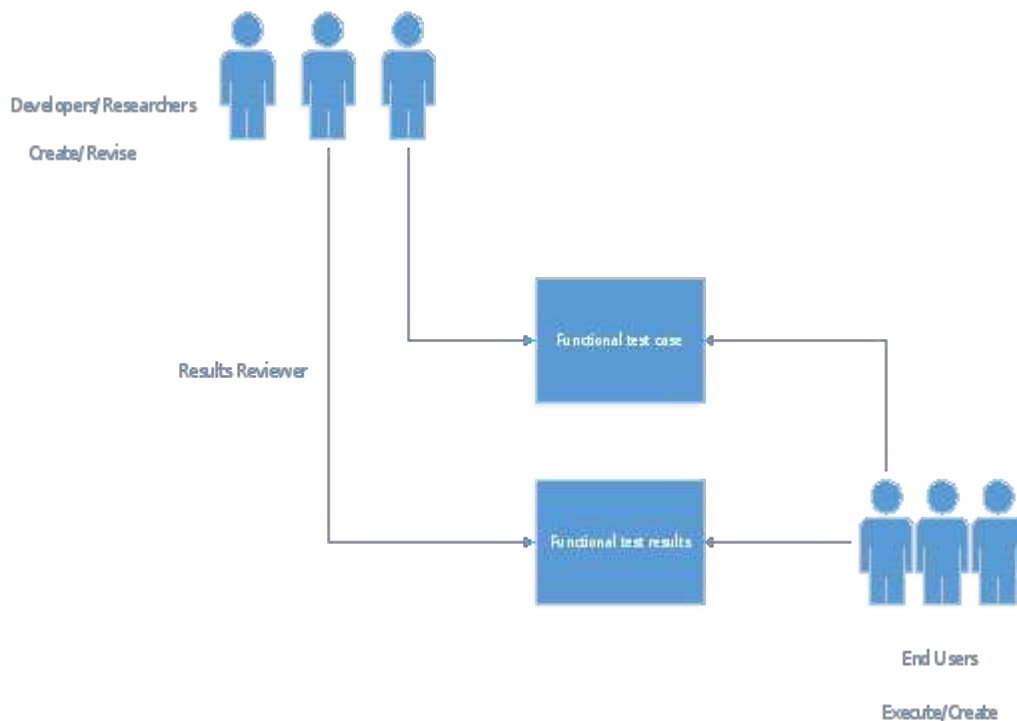
175 started with the development of an Augmented Reality prototype and based at the beginning of
176 the process on assumptions of how this prototype will function and its main features. After this,
177 and focusing more on the prototype development aspects and based on literature review, different
178 Augmented Reality platforms were tested.

179 **Iterative cycles of testing**

180 A “think aloud” session was organized and included 8 final-year undergraduate medical students
181 from the Karolinska Institutet. The recruitment of the students based on an open announcement.
182 The selection criteria of this group of students were based on the fact that the designed AR
183 prototype will be used by medical students, and the fact that the testing prototype requires from
184 the user to have a basic knowledge of Antibiotics in order to understand the prototype’s principles
185 and dynamics.

186 Thinking-aloud tests conformed to the traditional Ericsson and Simon (E&S) model [25].
187 The process proceeded within the context of designing an AR prototype for Antibiotics’
188 education. Before the beginning of the “thinking-aloud” session, a simple AR prototype was
189 developed based on the information collected from the literature review.

190 The prototype was tested in terms of functionality and viability. A functional test plan was
191 conducted with the usage of test cases. The test cases can reveal flaws in the functional specs. It
192 was asked from the users to use their phones and install an AR scanner. In continuous, we run a
193 test case based on a training session for antibiotics prescription.



194 Figure 1. Functional test case diagram

195 Production of design principles

196 The prototype was built upon the idea that the antibiotic medication box could be useful for the
197 antibiotic educational process since it is something that they will use in a real context in hospitals
198 following the completion of their studies. One antibiotic box was used for this prototype
199 (Kåvepinin) visualizing additional information when the box was scanned by a mobile device.
200 More specifically, the Kåvepinin box was chosen as a marker. This prototype was the backbone
201 upon which we based the “thinking-aloud” session in order to facilitate the students in
202 understanding how AR works and what its main features are. At the beginning of the session, a
203 short presentation took place, during which videos and images were used to show students the
204 AR technology in the medical as well as other fields.

205 Following this, we started discussing the potential usage of AR. The discussion started by setting
206 firstly the context in which the students assumed that this prototype could fit better. The
207 potential of using real antibiotic products and the features that AR could provide in this design
208 were examined. Moreover, we examined the contextual framework within which the AR
209 technology could be incorporated and how this could be designed. Whenever a discussion was
210 loaded from information a short presentation on the projector was taking place showcasing what
211 the prototype will look like. This fact triggered the beginning of new ideas regarding the
212 prototype’s User Interface and its different functions. Notes were kept from their observations
213 and proposals, and the conversation moved forward in this manner. For analyzing the data of the
214 web based questionnaire, thematic context analysis was used. This technique structures the
215 collective answers by dividing them into categories of identified themes.

216 Results

217 From the collected information, it was concluded that physicians in a real clinical context follow
218 a routine when they come to prescribe an antibiotic to a patient. However, the process still is
219 complex and in some cases different prescription methods are used. This study explores the most
220 common habits in the prescription process; it does not investigate individual patient’s incidents.

221 Nine out of ten resident doctors answered that the two most important elements in the
222 prescription process are the guidelines and the side effects. Nine out of ten resident doctors also
223 mentioned that they use Strama (paper) as a guideline consulting tool and six out of ten use
224 Klocka Listan for the same purpose.

Important information during the prescription process in hospital.		Tools that the doctors using during a prescription process	
Antibiotic Guidelines	90%	Strama (paper based)	90%
Antibiotic Side Effects	90%	Strama (mobile)	10%
Clinical manifestation	10%	Antibiotic List	60%
Allergies	10%		
Earlier failed antibiotic treatment	10%		

225 Table 1: The physicians opinions on what aspects of antibiotics are important during the prescription process.

226 The information that was collected is analyzed bellow in order to extract useful information for
227 the prototype:

228 **Antibiotic Guidelines**

229 According to the British Infection Association and Health Protection Agency, guidelines are
230 “intended to aid selection of an appropriate antibiotic for typical patients with infections
231 commonly seen in general practice. Individual patient circumstances and local resistance patterns
232 may alter treatment choices.”

233 **Antibiotic Side Effects**

234 According to the University of Michigan Health System “Common side-effects include diarrhea,
235 resulting from disruption of the species composition in the intestinal flora, resulting, for example,
236 in overgrowth of pathogenic bacteria, such as clostridium difficile.” [26]

237 **Strama**

238 According to the Swedish Strategic Programme against Antibiotic Resistance Strama is “an
239 advisory body with the remit to assist the Swedish Institute for Infectious Disease Control:

240 1) Matters regarding antibiotic use and containment of antibiotic resistance

241 2) Facilitates an interdisciplinary and locally approved working model, ensuring involvement by
242 all relevant stakeholders including national and local authorities and non-profit organizations.”
243 [27]

244 **Literature review**

245	Topic	Total Papers	Examined
246	Augmented Reality	183.691	124
247	Augmented Reality in Healthcare	3.280	23
248	Augmented Reality and Medical Education	2.833	26
249	Augmented Reality and Antibiotics	6	6
250	Design based research	23	11
251	Information Technology and Medical Education	182	27
	Antibiotics and Prescription Processes	11	11

In the literature review that was performed, with the aim to explore studies and researches in the similar field with the current study, the following results were returned:

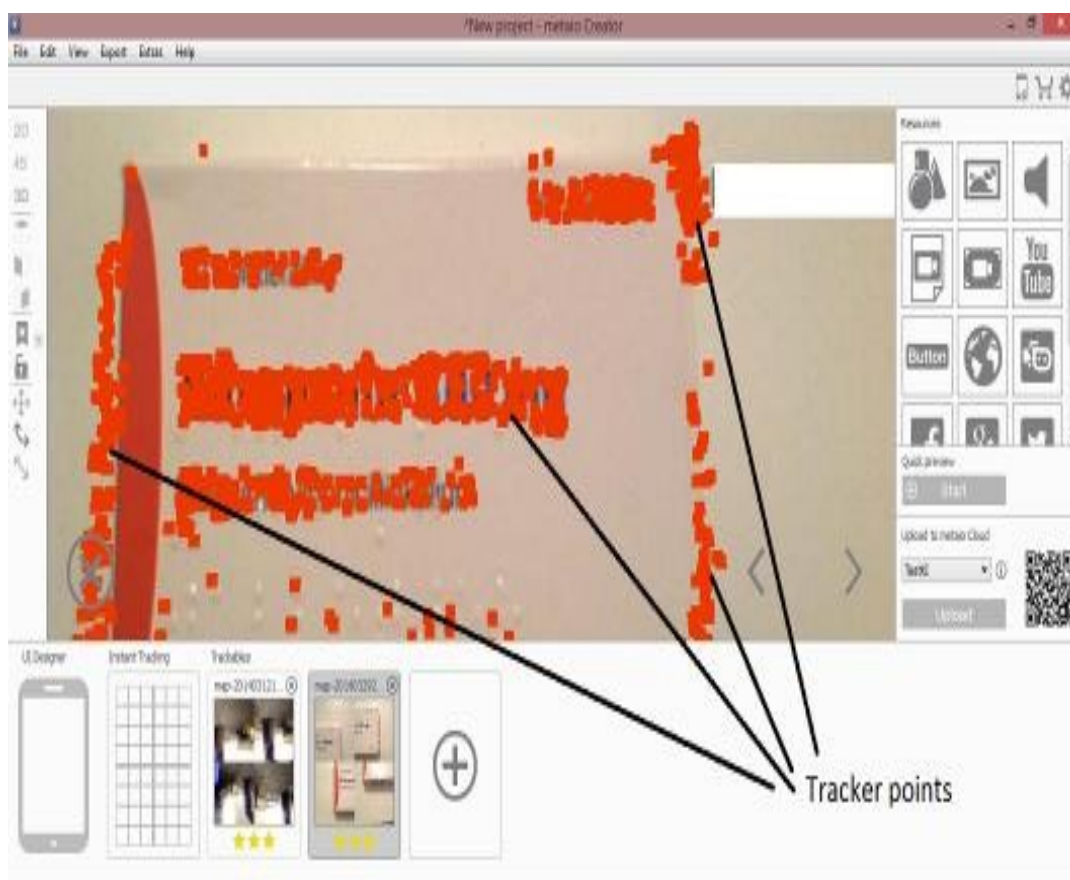
252 Table 2: Literature review results with the usage of specified terminology

253 Augmented reality plays a significant role in technological research. Since this technology can be
254 applied in many different areas, there was a wide range of research papers. Focusing more in the
255 medical field the extent of the research papers increased but was still too general since
256 medical sector cover many different department from surgeries and diagnostics to practical
257 training and inter-professional skills. From the final amount of searched papers, 118 papers were
258 chosen for analysis and reviewing, in order to investigate the methods that different researchers
259 followed in the development of AR prototypes for educational purposes.

260 From the examined studies in Augmented Reality technology and Medical Education, it was
261 concluded that AR is implemented in some areas of medical education, for instance in
262 dermatology courses, surgery courses and in some microbiology and biology courses.
263 However, no research was found in the fields of antibiotics prescribing education.

264 **Prototype Development**

265 The first pilot prototype was designed and developed based on the first open web
266 survey. In the figure 1below a print screen from the development platform during the
267 prototype development is shown.



268 Figure 2 Shows the development process of an AR traceable object.

269 The tracker points are used by the computer system in order to build a traceable object which will be
 270 recognizable from the system. This will be used as an augmented reality scanner. The 3d map of the
 271 object is then being uploaded to a channel, which is simply a short space provided by the development
 272 platform in order to upload projects. The server automatically generates a QR code which is the key for
 273 accessing the channel. The user scans the QR code and inserts it into the channel. Next, the user scans the
 274 real object and the augmented information which has been saved in the 3d map is visualized in the user's
 275 mobile device.

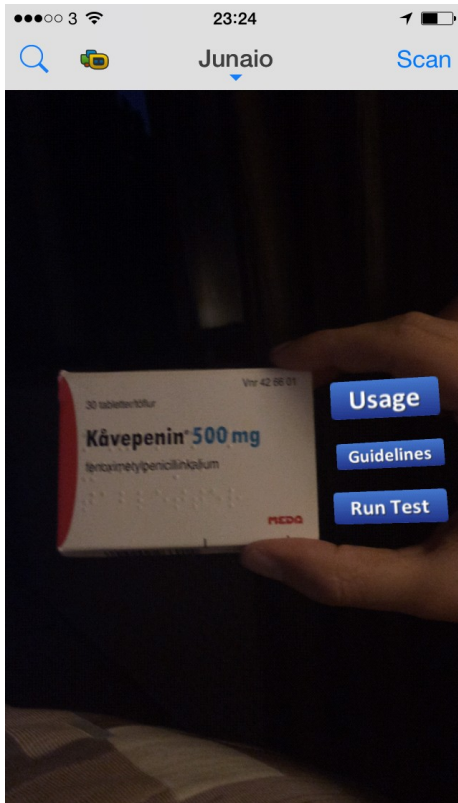
276 **Objects design**

277 For the objects' development SketchUp 3d was used. We designed simple 3d
 278 clickable buttons with name categories:

- 279 • Button 1: Antibiotic Guidelines
- 280 • Button 2: Antibiotic proper usage
- 281 • Button 3: Run a test

282 We gave then to the buttons "forward" and "back" functionality. We designed a
 283 transparent text presenting the information according to the title that was written in

284 the button. For instance, for button 1, information for Antibiotic Guidelines were
285 written. This model was imported in the AR platform as “3d button”. When the user
286 scans the antibiotics (Kåvepenin) drug box the buttons appeared in the right side of
287 the box as it is presented in the following figure. By clicking one of the buttons, the
288 information appearing in the users’ display.



289 Figure 3. Presents the users display when the drug box is scanned from an AR scanner.

290 **Evaluation of the prototype**

291 The prototype was evaluated by the end users (students) in terms of functionality and viability.
292 It was observed that the end users were not familiar with the augmented reality technology and
293 its functions. The functionality test though show us a high level of acceptance of AR
294 technology as a training tool. The users were satisfied with the combination of a real object
295 (drug box) which they will use in the real context in the future, with the digital information. The
296 process was also very fast without the need of the users to use special equipment, log in
297 information or special training to use the application.

298 From the other hand, some observations regarding the user interface and the functionality of the
299 application from mobile devices should be mentioned. Some of the users found difficult to use
300 their mobile phones and interact with display information.

301 Some of the student’s quotes considered for evaluating the drug box prototype are
302 presented below:

303 Participant 6:

304 “ It seems useless to have a training session with the drug box...for me the interface is quite
305 difficult to use it”

306 Participant 8

307 “The drug boxes are changing every six months approximately... probably we
308 need to keep only the brand name as a tracker and not the whole drug box”

309 Participant 2:

310 *“It would be useful to have a picture that refers to antibiotics and with the usage of AR it takes
311 real life”*

312 Participant 5:

313 *“I want also in this prototype to have a video for informing the students about the causes of non-
314 proper prescription and the antimicrobial resistance”*

315 Participant 6:

316 *“I would like to have pictures or 3d objects of current active antibiotics that the hospitals are
317 using in Sweden and to visualize the basic guidelines of each agent.”*

318 **Discussion**

319 Antimicrobial resistance is currently one of the biggest global health issues in the world. This
320 problem is complex and incorporates many different scientific fields. This study approached the
321 problem from the educational perspective and attempted to answer the scientific questions
322 that were set in order to examine the potentiality of modern technologies, such as Augmented
323 Reality, to be applied as an educational tool in the education of antibiotics. The research
324 question to identify the aspect that are important during a prescription process was
325 answered. This information, victualled the study in terms of prototype development.

326 **The prototype development**

327 We used for the development of this prototype the Metaio Platform Beta Version. From one hand,
328 in this version the developer is flexible to develop an AR prototype in limited time. The platform
329 provides also the opportunity to upload the prototype and test it in real time everywhere. From
330 the other hand in this version the development features are limited. As a matter of fact the
331 developer is confined to use specific tools that the platform provides. Future studies might
332 consider more flexible platforms such as Unity Vuforia, for their prototype development.

333 Since we know from our research, which information of antibiotics’ can be used in antibiotics’
334 prescription training session, it is matter of design how this information will be designed and set

335 for AR visualization. For the drug box prototype we used as visualized objects 2d clickable
336 buttons. We chose this structure in order to separate the different information categories. An
337 alternative development process would be to visualize directly the categories without buttons but
338 then should be taken under consideration the size of the screen from the tested device (ex, mobile
339 phone, tablet) and fit this information according to this size. End user acceptance for the use of
340 AR in education.

341 Approaching the antibiotics field from the training perspective, this study show which
342 information of antibiotics are important during a prescription process in a hospital. Based on this
343 information, we developed an augmented reality prototype aiming to support the training session
344 of antibiotics prescription education. The results indicates that augmented reality technology had
345 high level of acceptance among the medical students who participated in this study, but the final
346 prototype needs further improvement.

347 **Limitations of the study**

348 This study investigated the design process of an AR prototype for supporting education about
349 antibiotics' prescription. The methodology followed was the Design Research and the structure
350 based on its principles. This study didn't complete more than one cycle of testing for the
351 developed prototype. This fact should be taken under consideration. Going deeper in the used
352 methodology different methods could be possible implemented, such as the observation in real
353 context and examination of educational processes for antibiotics. Another approach could
354 possible to involve teachers in the development process and take under consideration their
355 insights. As an alternative, the model methodology was examined. The basic principle of this
356 methodology is "the purposeful abstraction of a real or a planned system with the objective of
357 reducing it to a limited, but representative, set of components and interactions that allow the
358 qualitative and quantitative description of its properties." This alternative should be
359 examined from the future researchers, especially from computer scientists in terms of AR model
360 development and AR model in medical education.

361 **Conclusion**

362 In this paper we examined and implemented an AR prototype in order to support the antibiotic's
363 prescription education. Our approach was based on the design research methodology. We
364 investigated which antibiotics information should be visualized and during the implementation of
365 the prototype we involved the users to consider their needs. Our results show how AR technology
366 can be used to support a training session for antibiotics' prescription and open the way for future
367 research by using real objects as educational resources.

368 **Acknowledgements**

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