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Letter to the Editor

Smart Ideas, Skilled Hands: The Role of Passion in Surgical Learning

Ideas Inteligentes, Manos Expertas: El Papel de la Pasión en el Aprendizaje Quirúrgico

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Dear Editor,

We read with great interest the article by Park & Shin (2025) titled "Innovative and Cost-Effective Kidney Anatomy Education Using Tomato Models" and we commend the authors. The authors have successfully highlighted how simple, low-cost resources can revolutionize medical education, making it more inclusive, accessible, and effective across different learning environments.

The idea of utilizing tomatoes and vegetables to replicate kidney anatomy demonstrates that educational excellence does not always require sophisticated or expensive materials. Rather, creativity, resourcefulness, and a deep understanding of educational needs can produce powerful tools for student engagement and knowledge acquisition and learning. In a time when disparities in educational resources are still evident worldwide, the ability to create realistic anatomical models with easily available materials represents a significant step.

We would also like to share our own experience with a similar approach, which further supports the findings of the authors. In our institution, we have developed and implemented a "tomato model" for surgical training of residents (Mantica *et al*., 2021). Beyond the practicality and anatomical similarities provided by the tomato's natural structure, we observed a remarkable level of enthusiasm among students and trainees when constructing and utilizing this simple model.

Enthusiasm, we believe, is one of the key drivers of success not only in training but also throughout a medical career. The passion and excitement that we have seen during the use of the tomato model was greater than what we have typically observed when using more sophisticated training models available in our clinical practice for difficult surgeries such as percutaneous nephrolithotomy (PCNL) (Mantica *et al*., 2022a). Residents expressed a sense of creativity, actively participating in both the preparation and the learning processes, which translated into improved engagement, concentration, and dedication. This emotional involvement, often underestimated in traditional training settings, plays a critical role in consolidating technical skills and professional identity Kavic, 1999; Gardner & Willis, 2022). Thus, models like these, have a powerful advantage: they transform learning from a passive reception of knowledge into an active and passionate journey.

Moreover, the practical ease of preparing such models enhances flexibility in educational planning, allowing for spontaneous sessions and a more personalized practice of surgery. A key advantage of these models, compared to more realistic alternatives such as cadaver-based simulations, is that they do not require complex legislation, ethical approvals, or standardization procedures (Mantica *et al*., 2022b). This makes them universally accessible and easily implementable in any setting, from high-tech institutions to resource-limited environments (Achanga *et al*., 2025; Mantica *et al*., 2019; Nadeem, 2024). This aspect is crucial for democratizing education, ensuring that every student, regardless of geographic or economic barriers, can access high-quality, hands-on anatomical training.

KEY WORDS: Training; Surgical training; Tomato; Passion; Ideas.

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