

COVID-19's effects on undergraduate medical education

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Abstract

Worldwide, medical education has been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. As academic institutions endeavor to impart medical knowledge through innovative approaches, this ongoing education guarantees the future workforce of the National Health Service (NHS) is well-versed. When developing new medical curriculum, innovative approaches to online instruction and online delivery of practical skills to medical students should be taken into account.

COVID-19's effects

The population, the world economy, and the health care systems have all been impacted globally by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. Even while the virus's propagation has had far-reaching effects, the closing of colleges and institutions has prompted creative new approaches to teaching, guaranteeing that students would still receive instruction even in new ways. In order to enable these temporary Foundation Year doctors to serve the healthcare system during the epidemic, medical institutions worldwide made an attempt to graduate final-year students.¹ Online learning is currently proving to be crucial in the continuance of medical education. As medical students in their last clinical year of undergraduate study, they have experienced the cancelation of all clinical assignments into the beginning of final year. New approaches to teaching medical students have emerged as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. With the use of platforms like Zoom, lectures may now be quickly delivered online as webinars. Research has already shown that medical students respond well to these technologically advanced delivery methods.² Online teaching platforms were helpful because of their global accessibility, ensuring that all medical students, regardless of their current location, can access webinars as they happen or can be recorded for later use. International students make up 19.6% of the total student population,³ and many of them returned home during the coronavirus outbreak. We have found that our online webinars covering important clinical conditions, case studies, and test questions have been well welcomed thus far. A consistent number of medical students have attended and participated in these classes at these extraordinary times. Exam techniques have also changed as medical education has moved to an online format. In response to the recent success of the first-ever online final-year exam for medical students,⁴ other universities are implementing an open-book examination strategy in order to guarantee that students stay interested in their studies. Almost all medical students will find the switch to open-book exams abrupt compared to their past exam-hall experiences. Nonetheless, open-book exams have been demonstrated to lessen student anxiety,⁵ and given the current COVID-19 pandemic's widespread degree of anxiety and panic, any method of testing students that helps lessen stress symptoms at this trying time is appreciated. Continuing education is essential to guaranteeing that the healthcare industry's future workforce is qualified, and medical school staff can do this by routinely interacting with medical students via online teaching platforms. The present effectiveness of open-book exams and online instruction offers a first glimpse of fresh approaches to medical education. It is encouraged to think about how these online techniques could be modified to provide remote instruction on clinical and practical skills that would have normally been acquired through clinical placements.

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