



IMPACT OF COVID – 19 ON MEDICAL EDUCATION

Pathology

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ABSTRACT

The world health organization (WHO) declared COVID – 19 a global pandemic on March 2020.1 Social distancing has been one of the measures adopted to prevent spread of the disease.1 Educational institutions have been shut down for the safety of students and communities. The pandemic has forced changes in medical education, methods and modalities. It has offered an opportunity to move to online learning and use of visual platforms.

KEYWORDS

COVID 19, medical education, online learning.

INTRODUCTION –

In the wake of the novel coronavirus, (COVID 19) pandemic, WHO implements useful and practical guidelines like social distancing. Many schools and Universities suspended their educational activities and proceeded to online teaching. Students may acquire the infection during the course of studies and may potentially spread the virus even when asymptomatic.2 Social distancing measures impede students from assembling in learning laboratories, lecture halls and in wards.3 Clinical posting had been cancelled. Immediate change was broad cancelling of in person medical classes and replacement by recorded lectures or live streams such as Google classroom, Zoom, Whatsapp etc. Medical students were missing out on valuable experience of presentation, clinical rotations, practicals, seminars and collaborative experience. This article evaluates the Impact of COVID – 19 pandemic on learning process.

Aims and Objectives –

- To determine the impact of COVID 19 on medical education.
- To determine the perception of medical students towards online learning.

INCLUSION CRITERIA–

MBBS students who are willing to opine the questionnaire and submitted the google form.

EXCLUSION CRITERIA–

MBBS students who did not fill the google form.

RESULTS

In this prospective and observational study, out of total 450 UG MBBS students, 380(84.4%) students were participated in the study by filling the google form. Out of which 205 (53.9%) were male and 75 (46.1%) were female between age group of 19 to 25 years.

Questionnaire was prepared for students and then was asked to submit it on google.

The questions asked were –

Sr no	Questions asked	Answers given by the students
1	What is your gender?	Male = 54.7% Female = 45.3%
2	What is your age	19 to 25 yrs = 99% 26 to 30 yrs = 1%
3	Which year of MBBS are you studying in?	1 st year = 64.1% 2 nd year = 12.3% 3 rd year = 23.6%
4	Whether the medical educational programme was suspended or postponed due to COVID 19 pandemic?	Yes = 58.2% No = 41.8%
5	Has the COVID 19 pandemic affected your well being?	Physical = 5.1%

		Social = 24.1% Mental = 41.6% Intellectual ability to learn = 29.2%
6	Do you think that this pandemic has affected your medical education?	Yes = 94% No = 6%
7	Which of the following device do you use for online learning?	Personal computer = 10.3% Tablet = 11.6% Smart phone = 87.7%
8	What was the quality of the internet services at your location?	Bad = 16.6% Good = 41.7% Acceptable = 30.1% Very good = 11.6%
9	Whether the pandemic has interfered with your ability to develop competency and skill in clinical laboratory training?	Yes = 90.4% No = 9.6%
10	Do you think that e - learning is more convenient and flexible than conventional learning?	Yes = 26.9% No = 73.1%

DISCUSSION

Due to Lockdown and social distancing in COVID 19 pandemic, transition occurred from traditional face to face learning to online learning.4 Closure of institution delayed the assessment and academic progress.3 Students missed the chance to learn about practical response. Many medical students have lost the opportunity for personal development through presentation.

The capability of taking online examinations has led to built various learning systems. Standard assessment formats like multiple choice questions, short answer questions and objective structured clinical examinations were reimaged. Greater emphasis on formative assessment and feedback was given4,5.

The other approach, schools had been considering the open book examinations. This tests the higher order cognitive skills. Entire curriculum of each phase of MBBS can be effectively carried out by dividing it into those components that predominantly involve knowledge or cognitive domain and those tests predominantly skill or psychomotor domain.6 The innately motivated learner were relatively unaffected in their learning as they needed minimum supervision and guidance, while the vulnerable group consisting of students who were weak in learning faced difficulties.6 Online education has its weaknesses. Students were facing many challenges during online learning. Faculties may consider students to be digital native and assume they will face no challenges in adaptive online learning.1 Thus, students required greater efforts to be motivated and stay engaged during online learning. Majority of students in rural areas did not have access to smart phones or computers in addition to poor internet connection. Some teaching staff unfamiliar with technology encountered challenges with electronic equipment, including

microphones and cameras. Internet instability was also an issue. For students who lack initiative and time management skills, online teaching made it difficult to keep up.⁷

The mental health of both faculty members and students should be supported during this period of crisis and uncertainty. Due to prolonging of academic year, emotional and psychological support for these student is necessary.

CONCLUSION –

This stressful situation with remarkable impact on medical education has turned into an opportunity. The curriculum should be reviewed and revised in such a way, to enable health work force to face and handle future epidemic and pandemic. This pandemic is teaching us various forms of learning teaching experiences, moving to online, keeping ourselves and our students engaged in various activities including psychosocial and life skills to make medical education holistic so that upcoming doctors are competent and ready to serve the society with required knowledge and skills.

Medical professional and students should prove capable of taking care of self and others^{8,9}. Our continued efforts strengthened in this pandemic by going through such educational experience.

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