



Original Article

ONLINE LEARNING IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

Publication History:

Received 21/5/2020
Accepted 02/6/2020
Published 12/6/2020

AUTHORS:

- 1- DR. SAMIA LIAQAT, SHIFA INTERNATIONAL HOSPITAL ISLAMABAD
- 2- DR. FOUZIA MUNAWAR, QUAID-E-AZAM MEDICAL COLLEGE BAHAWALPUR
- 3- DR. HAMMAD MOHSIN, THQ HOSPITAL KALLAR SYEDAN RAWALPINDI



Corresponding Author:

Dr. Hammad Mohsin
THQ Hospital Kallar Syedan Rawalpindi
drhammadmohsin1989@gmail.com

DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.3967418

Cite this article as:

Liaqat S, Munawar F, Mohsin H, Online learning in the era of Covid-19. Int. J. Med. Dent. Allied Health Sci. 2020;2(6). 114-21

ABSTRACT:

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of schools, universities, and colleges. In this COVID-19 pandemic, it was seen that most of the medical institutes in Pakistan shifted towards online learning. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of online learning in medical institutes during this COVID-19 pandemic. A total of 220 medical students responded to our study. There were 123 male students (55.91%) and 97 female students (44.09%).

© Copyright 2020

This is an open access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License CC-BY 4.0., which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited.





The mean age of the students was 21.23 ± 2.45 years. Hundred percent of the students responded that online learning is happening for the first time in our institute, 158 (71.82%) responded that they are completely satisfied with the timings of online lectures, 169 (76.82%) responded that they are comfortable about quality and clarity of lectures delivered online, 137 (62.27%) said they have sufficient opportunity to ask questions from the teachers and clear their ambiguities, 189 (85.91%) students were keen enough to complete their assignments.

Keywords: Covid-19, Online Learning, E-learning, Distance Learning

INTRODUCTION:

Online learning involves courses offered by institutions that are hundred percent virtual. Online learning, or virtual classes offered over the internet, is contrasted with traditional courses taken in a brick-and-mortar school building. Many institutions utilize a Learning Management System for the administration of online courses. As theories of distance education evolve, digital technologies to support learning and pedagogy continue to transform as well (1, 2).

According to a survey conducted by "Times Higher Education", on the prospects of higher learning from the perspectives of leaders of major universities in the world



in 2018, about 200 respondents drawn from 45 countries across the 6 continents pointed to a specific fact; online education cannot match the normal teaching method. However, 63% predicted that by 2030 most prestigious universities will be offering their full courses online. However, only 24% agreed that electronic learning would be more popular than traditional methods of learning. It was also discovered that students who take their course online outperform classroom-based students across most subjects as well as demographics (3).

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of schools, universities, and colleges. Most governments around the world have temporarily closed educational institutions to contain the spread of COVID-19. Millions of learners are currently affected due to these educational closures in response to the pandemic. In response to these closures, it was recommended to start distance learning or virtual programs and open educational applications and platforms that institutes and teachers can use to reach learners remotely and limit the disruption of education (4, 5).

Online Learning has been a key feature of learning technologies in medical education and is expected to maintain its position of prominence. It encompasses many technologies and activities that constitute it, where the learning process is supported or mediated



using technologies. A meta-analysis of research in medical education indicates online learning is associated with positive outcomes across a wide variety of learners, learning contexts, clinical topics, and learning outcomes (6, 7).

In this COVID-19 pandemic, it was seen that most of the medical institutes in Pakistan shifted towards online learning. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of online learning in medical institutes during this COVID-19 pandemic.

MATERIAL AND METHODS:

This survey study was conducted through an online survey. An online form was shared with medical students through their class representatives. The students from different classes i.e. first year to final year were included. The responses were collected and analyzed with SPSS Ver. 25.0. The relevant statistical analyses were performed with the help of a statistician.

RESULTS:

A total of 220 medical students responded to our study. There were 123 male students (55.91%) and 97 female students (44.09%). The mean age of the students was 21.23 ± 2.45 years, the mean age of male students was 22.31 ± 1.76 years and mean age of female students was 21.12 ± 1.11 years. There were thirty-nine students (17.73%) from first year, 55 (25%) from 2nd years and 42



(19.09%), 49 (22.27%) and 35 (15.91%) from 3rd, 4th, and final year, respectively.

Hundred percent of the students responded that online learning is happening for the first time in our institute, 158 (71.82%) responded that they are completely satisfied with the timings of online lectures, 169 (76.82%) responded that they are comfortable about quality and clarity of lectures delivered online, 137 (62.27%) said they have sufficient opportunity to ask questions from the teachers and clear their ambiguities, 189 (85.91%) students were keen enough to complete their assignments. When asked about comparison of these online classes with physical classes, 179 (81.36%) students responded that they want to join physical classes as soon as possible and 41 (18.64%) students responded that they don't want to join physical classes. Among these who wanted to join physical classes, the majority belonged to third, fourth and final year classes who need to join the clinical lessons and practical examinations in their hospitals.

DISCUSSION:

Over the last number of decades there has been a shift in medical education practice from traditional forms of teaching to other media which employ online, distance or electronic learning (8). As described by Howlett et al. (9), Electronic (e) or online learning can be defined as the use of electronic technology and media to deliver,



support, and enhance both learning and teaching and involves communication between learners and teachers utilising online content. Online learning can provide students with “easier and more effective access to a wider variety and greater quantity of information”(10). However, the transition from traditional to online learning is not without challenges. Increasing time constraints and demands are continually placed on students and educators alike, driving departments to find new ways of providing a more personalised, self-directed learning experience.

Social distancing is the most effective preventative strategy since the emergence of COVID-19 pending development of a vaccine, treatment, or both. By definition, this precludes students from gathering in learning studios, lecture halls, or small-group rooms. So, there was a need to shift to the online learning methodologies. For a period of time, medical schools have been working to transform education by reducing lectures; using technology to replace/enhance anatomy and laboratories; implementing team-facilitated, active, and self-directed learning; and promoting individualized and interprofessional education. The development of entrustable professional activities and competency-based learning with identified milestones for achievement have transformed assessment (11).



REFERENCES:

1. Moore JL, Dickson-Deane C, Galyen K. e-Learning, online learning, and distance learning environments: Are they the same? *The Internet and Higher Education*. 2011;14(2):129-35.
2. Potts HW. Student experiences of creating and sharing material in online learning. *Medical Teacher*. 2011;33(11):e607-e14.
3. Demuyakor J. Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Online Learning in Higher Institutions of Education: A Survey of the Perceptions of Ghanaian International Students in China. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*. 2020;10(3):e202018.
4. Agarwal S, Kaushik JS. Student's perception of online learning during COVID pandemic. *Indian Journal of Pediatrics*. 2020:1.
5. Chiodini J. Online learning in the time of COVID-19. *Travel Medicine and Infectious Disease*. 2020.
6. Kim K-J, Kim G. Development of e-learning in medical education: 10 years' experience of Korean medical schools. *Korean journal of medical education*. 2019;31(3):205.
7. Scott K, Morris A, Marais B. Medical student use of digital learning resources. *The clinical teacher*. 2018;15(1):29-33.
8. Shachar M, Neumann Y. Differences between traditional and distance education academic performances: A meta-analytic approach. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*. 2003;4(2).
9. Howlett D, Vincent T, Gainsborough N, Fairclough J, Taylor N, Cohen J, et al. Integration of a Case-Based Online Module into an Undergraduate Curriculum: what is involved and is it effective? *E-Learning and Digital Media*. 2009;6(4):372-84.



International Journal of Medical, Dental, and Allied Health Sciences

10. Mooney G, Bligh J. Information technology in medical education: current and future applications. *Postgraduate medical journal*. 1997;73(865):701-4.
11. Rose S. Medical student education in the time of COVID-19. *Jama*. 2020.