

Need to Evaluate Virtual Teaching of Medicine Post-Pandemic

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Abstract:

The two main educational paradigms in medical education are biomedical research and the social context, both directly influenced by educational paradigms and pedagogical strategies. Therefore, the purpose of this letter to the editor is to expand on the argument regarding information and communication technology as a tool for medical education during times of widespread and rapidly transmitted infections, its advantages and disadvantages, and finally, to highlight the need for studies on the professional competence of physicians who graduated during and shortly after the pandemic.

Key words: medicine; pandemic; covid-19; virtual teaching; competence

Dear Editor

In today's globalized world, the medical profession must focus on biomedical research and social commitment—a humanitarian commitment, we might add—based on the self-construction of thought for the development of competencies and aligned with the needs of the country's healthcare sector, where universities are located [1, 2]. Based on the above, two paradigms define the medical profession worldwide in the study of the complex interaction between health and disease. Both are constructivist in nature: the Flexnerian paradigm (from the first decade of the 20th century), which prioritizes the biological dimension of disease (a stark biologism that integrates basic and clinical sciences), and the specialization of medical practice in the care of the individual. Therefore, in terms of the quality of medical training, the number of clinical studies produced is crucial. The critical perspective is the second paradigm to consider, also focused on the construction of reflective thinking (diagnostic hypotheses), but based on the observation and analysis of the social environment, beliefs, and emotions in the generation of scientific knowledge [1, 3]. It is understood that, in times of pandemic, such as COVID-19, information and communication technology was the tool to be used for medical education, as it kept professors and their students safe from contagion, especially those in the early stages of the curriculum, given its practicality (studying from home), efficiency, and cost-effectiveness. This led to a shift from face-to-face to virtual learning, despite the limited preparation many professors exhibited in the field and the improvisation in the pedagogical strategies employed [4-6]. At that

time, it became necessary to rethink the teaching strategies for training physicians in the face of easily and rapidly transmissible infections like COVID-19. Logistically, both theoretical subjects and hospital internships were sacrificed, but especially the latter (and perhaps the effective development of knowledge and skills), as they were either not offered or their duration was shortened to prevent infections and to train physicians quickly, given the reduction in the number of these professionals due to deaths from SARS-CoV-2 infection [7-9]. Now that the COVID-19 pandemic has passed, it is urgent to evaluate these cohorts of physicians, because a doctor becomes a doctor by learning to practice in the context where patients are found, in healthcare facilities, where they can conduct the interview and clinical examination, the basis for establishing timely treatment. The rapid transition to distance learning undoubtedly affected the understanding of the biological dimension of the disease and, of course, the comprehension of the social sphere in which it occurs. In the first case, this was due to the use of abbreviated versions of concepts, and in the second, to the interruption of social contact [10-12]. From these reflections arises the concern, and indeed the premise, of the need for studies on the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the professional preparation of medical graduates during and shortly after its end. This is because the transition was from the consolidated conventional educational setting (characterized by vast experience and a solid theoretical foundation) to distance learning, which was almost entirely new in some countries and had a weaker theoretical basis.

Conflict of interests

The authors have no conflict of interest to declare. The authors declared that this study has received no financial support.

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