

The Provision of a Safe Face-to-Face Teaching Program for Final Year Medical Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract : Background: Due to patient and student safety concerns, combined with clinical teachers being redeployed to clinical practice, COVID-19 has resulted in a reduction in face-to-face teaching sessions for medical students. Traditionally such sessions are particularly important for final year medical students, especially in preparing for their final practical exams. A reduced student presence on the wards has also resulted in fewer opportunities for junior doctors to provide teaching sessions. This has implications for junior doctors achieving their own curriculum outcomes for teaching, as well as potentially hindering the development of a future interest in medical education. Aims: The aims of the study are 1) To create a safe face-to-face teaching environment during COVID-19 which focussed on exam preparation for final year medical students, 2) To provide a platform for doctors to gain teaching experience, 3) to enable doctors to gain feedback or assessments on their teaching, 4) To create beginners guide to designing a new teaching program for future junior doctors. Methods: We created a program of timed clinical stations consisting of four sessions every five weeks during the student's medicine attachment. Each session could be attended by 6 students and consisted of 6 stations ran by junior doctors, with each station following social distancing and personal protective equipment requirements. Junior doctors were asked to design their own stations. The sessions ran out-of-hours on weekday evenings and were optional for the students. Results: 95/95 students and 20/40 doctors involved in the programme completed feedback. 100% (n=95) of students strongly agreed/agreed that sessions were aimed at an appropriate level and provided constructive feedback. 100% (n=95) of students stated they felt more confident in their abilities and would recommend the session to peers. 90% (n=18) of the teachers strongly agreed/agreed that they felt more confident in their teaching abilities and that the sessions had improved their own medical knowledge. 85% (n=17) of doctors had a teaching assessment completed, and 83% (n=16) said the program had made them consider a career in medical education. The difficulties of creating such a program were highlighted throughout, and a beginner's guide was created with the hopes of helping future doctors who are interested in teaching address the common obstacles.

Keywords : COVID-19, education, safety, medical

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