



Dental Education in COVID Times

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Editorial Article

As we all know that a very small and an abstruse virus i.e. corona virus (COVID 19) has really spun the world, creating an uncertain and alarming situation globally. Until 2019, everything was going smooth and falling into place. In terms of the educational institutes, the way of teaching was inclined more towards the offline system earlier. The devastating effects of this notorious virus had potentially influenced every sector of the society in a negative way. Out of this, one of the most respectable and hardworking professions belong to teaching. The same connotes well for the professional institutions involved in teaching dental students and professionals.

With due course of time, there has been a paradigm shift from actual classroom to virtual online method for dental education. As we are into online teaching for both undergraduates and postgraduates through various online portals, it has been a great teaching experience using such hi-tech platforms. A large portion of the curriculum has already been covered in a very systematic manner. Not only this, revision classes are also been taken up along with various assignments for students & sending required presentations particularly to those who don't have books to read in the current lockdown situation. This has further improved the faculty student relationship.

The postgraduate teaching includes seminars, journal clubs, case presentation, thesis and library dissertation presentation by the respective PG as per the roster. Not only this, the faculties are actively involved in upgrading the knowledge through various webinar activities. Even those interested in research are having good influx of knowledge for the same.

Online distant education helped to strengthen the faculty student relationship. The faculty reassured the students with

psychological counselling methods. Even the students as well as faculty over the period of time and with the usage of various available online dental portals came up to be more techno savvy. The scope of using the innovative "Virtuality Reality (VR)" concept as a method of simulation to teach the students has been found to be the best manner during the lockdown times. Haptic technology or simulation has helped the students a lot particularly when skills are involved. The introduction of various lab procedures and clinical skills could be possible through this simulation technology in e learning systems.

For that matter, in terms of dental research, there has been a great uptake of research studies and projects i.e. intra mural and extra mural projects along with seed money projects in relation to COVID-19. Many clinical and laboratory-based dental research studies were impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. For that matter, there has been an extensive usage of online web platforms and virtual classrooms not only for the dental education but also for the dental researcher. This includes formulation of questionnaire surveys to conduct descriptive studies as well as literature reviews.

The new way of teaching methodology i.e. online/digital/virtual/e-teaching method for dental education has its own merits and demerits. Although, the current situation demands the need of E-learning but then to a certain extent the system of digital education is beneficial. In fact, many students prefer digital education due to visual memory, can wake up late, no fear of being scolded, one can study in a more convenient manner, saving a lot of time, money and energy and an easy access to the recorded lectures. It is truly, said, "Something is better than nothing" which truly depicts that during these

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unprecedented times, owing to the lockdown, digital education is the only preferred mode. On the contrary, the digital education model is associated with various flaws. Many students do not have access to the internet, no proper student teacher interaction rather impossible to manage and control the students over the online educational portals and furthermore sitting for continuous hours can be harmful to the eyes. Nothing can actually replace the traditional classroom methods, which were actually the best to develop a positive rapport and relation between faculty and the students.

Henceforth, it is right to say that a large part of curriculum has been covered through online web teaching portals (digital mediums) with the convenience of both teacher and student which furthermore helped to improve the faculty student relationship in these turbulent times.