

## LETTER TO EDITOR

# Effect of COVID-19 on Undergraduate Medical Education: A Letter from Pakistan

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Dear Editor,

First identified in Wuhan, China, on December 31 2019, coronavirus spread like bush fire. The WHO declared it as a Global Pandemic on March 11 2021. COVID-19 was termed novel based on newly identified pathogens, thus leading to a state of uncertainty regarding treatment and prevention<sup>1</sup>. This virus can present with an array of symptoms; dry cough, breathlessness, chest pain, myalgia, and diarrhea<sup>2</sup>. Undergraduate medical education has shifted to virtual learning systems to halt the transmission of the virus. This letter elaborates on the challenges faced and the impact of COVID-19 on the life of undergraduate medical students.

From the students to the working healthcare professionals, the coronavirus pandemic has affected the medical community the hardest; Clinical rotations were canceled with little or no warning while pre-clinical students moved to online classes<sup>3</sup>. The stress and uncertainty during this time are taking their toll on our psychological wellbeing<sup>4</sup>. Doctors are striving to deliver the same level of education while also battling the pandemic; exploring different ways of imparting knowledge as well as practical skills. While continuing with their education, medical students are helping combat this virus through volunteering their time at hospitals and with research.

Amidst this pandemic, the world is struggling to adapt to this new normal. Drastic changes have been brought to the medical education system as students now have online classes and clinical training. Although it is difficult to deliver information in this manner, online education has brought with it its advantages. Students save up on time, money, and energy, which can be put towards assignments and research projects. Online forums are an excellent way to prompt discussion amongst students as they pour in their opinions. Recorded lectures can be reviewed later for reinforcement. However, limited patient interaction has its challenges. Regardless, this adaptation over traditional university learning is safe and effective.

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### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

### AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

All authors contributed equally and approved the final manuscript.

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