

What has Virtual Education Taught the Anatomists? A Throwback to The Lockdown Times

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Letter to Editor

The lockdown in India during March 2020 was a big event historically and also from educational point of view. 1st MBBS batches had incomplete syllabus and cadaveric dissection left because of discontinuation of all classes by government orders [1]. Online classes on various LMS platforms were scheduled for Anatomy like virtual lectures and online practical classes. First recorded lectures on Google classroom were uploaded. Later live virtual lectures were taken on Zoom app and Google Meet app [2]. The loss of interaction with batch mates and teachers will leave an emotional impact on the students and hamper the overall development of undergraduate students [3].

Students and teachers both experienced problems like difficulty in adjusting to this app driven teaching and connectivity issues. Most of the students had their bonesets in their hostel rooms while they were stuck at home. Online Osteology classes could not replace the demonstration room osteology tutorials as mentioned by 64.1% students [2].

Performing and experiencing Cadaveric dissection is a once in a lifetime opportunity. This 3D education on a once living cadaver you can never forget in your life. Earlier studies have shown 64.6% [4] and 19.9 % [5] students having fear of cadaver before start of dissection but after 8 weeks of dissection they showed 99% [4] and 100% [5] saying that dissection was an indispensable learning tool. But in COVID times dissection was replaced by recorded dissection videos and images. In a study among students after finishing online anatomy classes, 89% said that virtual classes can't replace

cadaveric dissection. On the other hand 59% strongly agreed that online histology classes gave a better comprehension of histology. 83% students disagreed when asked if regular didactic lectures should be replaced by online lectures [2]. The biggest drawback of these online virtual classes was loss of face to face interaction between student and teacher, 85.11% students had said that interaction with the anatomy staff had helped them emotionally during cadaveric dissection classes [5].

Many teachers were technophobic but later they have adjusted and overcome the initial reluctance and accepted the various apps and gadget driven teaching. A hybrid mode of anatomy teaching has been found beneficial, thus incorporating the old traditional teaching methods with this new virtual mode of anatomy teaching [6]. Anatomy should not be a boring and pneumatic driven subject but dynamic and innovative thus interesting post the pandemic [2].

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