

Anatomy Education during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Student Perspective

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Abstract

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Dear Editor,

SARS-CoV-2 virus causing the on-going pandemic have led to a lot of changes in our daily, professional life. Online mode of teaching and learning is going on for almost a year for most of the students across the globe. This online method of study brought a lot of changes in the medical student's life and major one was learning and teaching strategies in the anatomy. Anatomy is a branch of science that investigates organs, bones, structures, and cells that exists in the body. Knowledge of structures of human body, which was interpreted from the unaided eye to the molecular level is fundamental to understanding body structure and functions.^[1] We all were aware that anatomy is the foundation stone of medical education and basis for many disciplines in the medicines like field of surgery and its branches.^[1,2]

During this pandemic time, due to COVID restrictions, there were a lot of changes in the teaching methods and approach to the subject from both teachers and the students. Cadaveric dissection and teaching through specimens, models microscopic slides, and bones is the signature approach of this discipline.^[2] But during the pandemic situation there is unexpected disruption to this traditional and effective method of teaching. Digital classes and virtual method of teaching is the only option left without face to face interactions, dissection halls and microscopic laboratories.^[2,3]

It took time to adapt for both faculty and students to this digital approach. Cadaveric dissection is an invaluable experience for the development of fine motor skills by direct touch and sense of different parts of the body, it also helps to retain the subject easily. Experience of dissecting the cadaveric enhance the better understanding of the anatomy.^[3] This pandemic had made students lost the physical exposure to cadavers besides

specimen models, bones...etc. students greatly felt the loss of acquaintance with they could get through physical classes. Live dissection helps to understand and grasp the subject really well. Even though video lectures and power point presentation with dissection videos and images of specimens are made but holding different organs and sensing it directly has been missed out.^[4]

To be precise and short, online anatomy learning is like providing textbooks with real cadaveric images with very less student-teacher interaction. There would also be a guilt in the students as they can't even say proper thanks and goodbye (both were a necessary ritual) for the donor body. In few circumstances, virtual learning has sharp edge like better interpretation using 3D models, prosection, digital media and virtual reality.^[3,4]

We would conclude by saying that, we felt online anatomy teaching methods lacks few advantages from the offline methods and online teaching could led to lack of interest, correct concepts and limiting knowledge in anatomy. Hybrid teaching approach could be a realistic approach to the anatomy subject in this pandemic.

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