

756 Adapting Undergraduate Teaching in the COVID 19 Era

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Aim: The COVID-19 pandemic has drastically impacted medical education, particularly in terms of content delivery and clinical placement efficacy. The initial suspension of placements was devised to limit exposure and redirect medical staff to critical areas. Nevertheless, clinical placements are an important pillar of the undergraduate curriculum and new techniques must be developed to better facilitate its delivery. Our aim was to create a programme that effectively met the required curriculum learning outcomes for medical students.

Method: In September 2020, students from Queen's University, Belfast, returned to placement following months of online and distance learning. Having previously focused on bedside and case-based teaching, our priority remained with patient and student safety. Complimentary non-clinical and simulation methods were introduced including laparoscopic skills, suture and knot tying sessions and foundation competencies. Rating scale questionnaires were distributed over a four-week period following each session.

Results: 32 sessions were carried out and 53 questionnaires returned. Three key areas were reviewed; teaching delivery, usefulness of session and content/relevance, with each area scored out of 10. Collectively across all sessions, 94.3%, 92.4% and 88.7% respectively were scored 9 or greater for each key area.

Conclusions: The COVID-19 crisis has led to the development of alternative methods of undergraduate teaching. The insurance of patient safety whilst preparing students for their future career is a priority. We have successfully developed an effective and useful placement that blends clinical knowledge and skill-based learning. Given the ongoing pandemic and redirection of resources, further novel ways of teaching should be considered.