

Acute Care Surgery Fellowship Program Acclimatization to the COVID-19 pandemic: Experience from Qatar

Editor

COVID-19 pandemic has almost affected all aspects of healthcare¹. Surgical trainees have been affected in many ways². Many services were reshaped³. We have read with great interest the articles by English *et al*⁴ and Kapila *et al*⁵ about the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and would like to share our experience with the acute care surgery fellowship training in the State of Qatar.

COVID-19 infection started in Qatar in February 2020 and in March 2020 the curve showed a steep rise. This was the time when the System-Wide Incident Command Committee (SWICC) decided to assign COVID hospitals and quarantine facilities. The elective surgeries were stopped.



The acute care surgery fellowship had six fellows at that time, some of whom were in other rotations. We decided to hold their rotations and pull them back to the acute care surgery team. This was for two reasons: (1) The rotations had elective procedures hence our fellows' training will be compromised by the stoppage of these; and (2) Our team was assigned to cover the surgical emergencies in the main COVID-19 hospital

and the fellows' support for that was appreciated. Moreover, the acute care surgery team was one of a few teams that continued to function fully during the pandemic. The duty roster was designed in a way to ensure equal coverage of the tertiary hospital emergency, and the COVID-19 main hospital amongst all the team members without compromising the patients' care. Besides, we recruited three new fellows who started in July 2020.

The fellows were happy that their training was not compromised in addition to being among the COVID-19 front liners. At the time being with the numbers of COVID-19 patients showing a downtrend and with the appointment of the new fellows, we decided to send two fellows to the Surgical Critical Care rotation.

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