

318 Adapting Surgical Intercalation Teaching to The Pandemic – A Novel Near-Peer Educational Model for Intercalating Medical Students

A. Srivastava, V.A.R. Thirupathirajan, E. Duffy
School of Medicine, University College London (UCL), London, United Kingdom

Aim: The COVID-19 pandemic has reduced medical student exposure to traditional formats of surgical teaching, thereby irrefutably altering surgical education for the foreseeable future. The pandemic has

compounded the preliminarily reported disconnect intercalating students experience, as well as depriving students of opportunities for surgical exposure. The aim of our study is to devise an innovative near-peer system to supplement surgical teaching and guidance for the 'Surgical Sciences' Intercalated BSc offered at University College London, hence promoting surgical education.

Method: Past students (preceding two cohorts) were competitively recruited, termed mentors. Each student was paired with a mentor for one-to-one guidance. Mentors and programme directors formulated surgical, module-specific, virtual tutorials (Zoom). Mentees were surveyed using predesigned Google Forms to gauge subjective utility. Likert Scales (0-10) were used for quantitative analysis and free-text fields for further commentary.

Results: Mentors and programme directors devised 8 module-specific, surgical tutorials over term 1, spaced on average at every 1.5 weeks. A statistically significant increase in confidence reported per taught module, from 5.85 ± 1.16 to 7.85 ± 0.93 ($P < 0.0001$), was observed. Mentees report an overall recommendation of 93.19% that all tutorials be rerun for the upcoming cohort. 75% of mentees predict their designated mentors will be 'very useful' in their surgical education.

Conclusions: A novel model of near-peer education for surgical intercalation studies has been successfully established, whereby students receive valuable education and guidance from mentors with relevant surgical experiences. Students report significant utility in this programme, which can be a constant in otherwise turbulent times for surgical education.