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IMPROVING THE PROVISION OF REGIONAL GERIATRIC MEDICINE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Introduction: In Wessex Deanery, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Geriatric Medicine trainees from 10 NHS trusts attended face-to-face regional teaching sessions. In response to the pandemic, this teaching was suspended to reduce disruption in service provision and support social distancing. There was a clear need to reintroduce teaching for continued professional development and trainee progression.

Methods: In July 2020, Geriatric Medicine trainees in Wessex completed a questionnaire survey to identify their desire for socially distanced teaching and an acceptable format for delivery. Two half-day pilot teaching sessions via MS Teams were organised in September and October 2020. Trainees provided feedback via a questionnaire survey about the relevance and quality of teaching, and to identify any barriers to attendance. Subsequently, a monthly full-day virtual teaching programme was implemented. We reported reflections of our experiences on our trainee website to support future sessions.

Results: All trainees (n = 15) were eager for regional teaching to recommence through socially distanced education. Trainees had a preference for MS Teams, which can support interactive teaching. Attendance to the pilot sessions exceeded previous face-to-face sessions. 19 trainees attended the first session; 17 provided feedback. 28 trainees attended the second session; 12 provided feedback. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive; all reported the sessions were interesting and 82% (n = 14) that they would lead to changes in their practice. Some trainees expressed that full-day sessions would enhance curriculum coverage. 94% (n = 16) were positive of the virtual platform; it reduced travel and sessions could be recorded. Local trainees attended the second session in-person, which enhanced interactivity.

Conclusion: Virtual teaching has been successful in Wessex Deanery, with high attendance and positive feedback. Trainees can engage remotely without the need for travel and disruption. After the pandemic we hope to develop a regional teaching programme integrating virtual and face-to-face sessions to improve attendance and accessibility.