

533 The Use of Virtual Reality Simulation to Facilitate Surgical Ward-Based Learning in Medical Students During the Covid-19 Pandemic.

I. Carty¹, R. Shah²

¹DVH, Dartford, United Kingdom, ²NHS, London, United Kingdom

Introduction: The Covid-19 pandemic quickly resulted in the removal of all non-essential personnel from surgical wards. It also resulted in suspending medical student placements which are heavily relied upon to provide the students with necessary “hands-on” experience. Virtual Reality (VR) simulation was employed in order to ensure that the students had a comparable experience.

Method: VR simulations were used to simulate the ward environments and the students were able to gain valuable experience with common scenarios encountered on surgical wards. Each student was allocated a 1-hour time slot per session with a debriefing session after each. The digital immersive environment allowed students to build upon their didactic preparation and previously acquired knowledge base.

Results: Feedback was given at the end of each simulation by the simulation facilitator. Using the technical proficiency that they had acquired in the first scenario; the students went on to employ these skills directly in their next scenarios thereby capitalising on the repetition of core skills to maximize their learning.

Conclusions: In this instance, VR was successfully used to enhance both knowledge acquisition and experience. Feedback from the participating students was overwhelmingly positive with many suggesting that they were more comfortable learning in a simulated environment.