Original Research Article

First year medical students feedback on online evaluation during Covid 2019: A study

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A R T I C L E  I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

Background: Due to the COVID pandemic, all the educational institutions, including medical colleges, are closed for students, and teaching methodology shifted from traditional offline teaching to online teaching. After the shift of teaching to the online mode from April 2020, the Narayana Medical College, like other Medical colleges, started online teaching and evaluation. Not much evidence is available about the student’s perception of online evaluation.

Objective: An online survey was conducted to study first-year medical student’s perceptions about the online evaluation through a structured questionnaire.

Materials and Methods: The study is conducted using a closed structured questionnaire containing ten questions with multiple responses and Yes or No responses. The study subjects included first-year MBBS students.

Results: The majority of the students are more comfortable with offline examination though they feel that it can be combined occasionally with an online examination in the post-COVID situation.

Conclusion: Students prefer offline examination to online examination, methods to combine offline, and online examinations need further study.

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1. Introduction

The invention of computer technology converted traditional classrooms with blackboards to computer-assisted classrooms. The widespread usage of the Internet further added to teaching and learning methods, the additional features like interactive teaching, smart classes as well online teaching and learning techniques. There is also a shift in competitive examination patterns from traditional paper-based to computer-assisted online examinations. National eligibility tests for Engineering students like JEE were completely made online. The medical common entrance test NEET is under consideration to be made online.

The Novel corona virus disease (COVID-19) outbreak has lead to a Health emergency and was declared as a public health emergency of international concern on January 30, 2020.¹ It was later proclaimed as Pandemic by WHO on March 11, 2020.² The Indian Government announced a Nationwide lockdown on March 25, 2020,³ onwards and various health universities of South India like Dr. NTRUHS, RGUHS, Dr. MGRUHS, KUHS advised medical colleges under them to conduct online classes from April 2020 onwards.

As the duration of lockdown progressed further, and further the Medical Colleges noticed the need to evaluate the students online as there was no scope of the offline evaluation. Due to the lack of standardized protocols and also due to the lack of knowledge of both students and teachers about online evaluation, there were some difficulties.

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Like online teaching, the online evaluation is also costlier as it requires Laptops, Smart Phones, and Internet facility; apart from these financial issues and technical issues related to the Internet, students mindset also to be shifted from traditional classroom-based examination to home-based online examination, which plays a vital role.

Studies were conducted both in India and abroad, more so during the COVID pandemic about student’s perception of online teaching. Few also focused on online evaluation. 2.1. Inclusion criteria

First year students voluntarily participated in the study with consent.

3. Analysis and Discussion

Majority students were not satisfied with online examination (62.2%). Only 16.7% felt that the online examination is better than offline examination and 13.3% are of opinion that both are equally good. The students feel isolated from the classmates in home based examination (58.9%).
The majority are not interested in taking online examination in post COVID scenario (73.3%) and regarding combination of both online and offline examinations 34.4% felt that they should not be combined and only about 4.4% favored regular combination. 51.1% of the students said they never copied in the examination, and the rest of them copied at least occasionally. Most of the students said they had faced technical difficulties during the examination (75.6%), and they are not sure from which end (47.8%).

The majority of students are under the opinion that MCQs should not be more than 50% of total marks (71.1%). Most of the students are of the opinion that the standards of online examination questioning are good (61.1%) 23.3% felt it is average, 12.2% felt excellent, and only 3.3% opined it as bad, and the majority felt that there is sufficient time to understand the questions (66.7%).

4. Conclusion
Students are still not accustomed to online examinations; they are ready to accept it with the traditional examination pattern. Students and teaching staff must be trained properly for online examinations. Facilities like the availability of computers/smart phones and fast Internet must be made affordable before online examinations are made more common.

5. Limitations and Recommendations
The study was conducted in a private medical college in South India involving first-year students, and the sample size is small. A large sample size involving more medical colleges, both private and Government, across India will give more accurate results.

6. Source of Funding
None.

7. Conflicts of Interest
The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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