

COVID-19 Impact on Clinical Rotations

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The COVID-19 (coronavirus disease of 2019) pandemic started later in 2019 sending billions of people into lockdown. This health crisis brought a destructive effect to the lives of many and was a great set back to the global economy including an interruption to the educational learning process. This pandemic led to the world wide policies of implementing social distancing to prevent the spread of this contagious disease. In this letter, I would address the negative impact of the current pandemic that has surpassed badly effecting the undergraduate medical education.

With the sudden lockdown implementation, clinical rotations were suspended. Medical students were not to be involved in direct patient management during the pandemic. Clinical rotations make the strong basis of the undergraduate learning. Being a final year medical student, we spend most of our dedicated time experiencing and learning at different departments including Medicine, Surgery and Pediatrics.

Sadly, we missed the opportunity due to the cancellation of rotations.

A recent article shows that one-fifth of students who participated in the study believed that the COVID-19 pandemic will affect their career badly. The students feared that not being able to explore specialties will have potential effects on their choice of specialty in future. Furthermore they will not be able to obtain the recommendation letters which is one of the requirements to get a residency abroad.¹ The impact on clinical rotations has been severe and unprecedented. Given that many medical students rotate at locations which are different from their resident site, they were asked to return back quickly as the COVID-19 cases began to rise.²

As, final Year student we are in transition from student to doctor. Not given the opportunity of learning in our core rotations might affect our

confidence level and our preparedness for internship.

UK medical schools have taken a huge national effort by graduating early nearly 5,500 final-year students which will allow for these interim foundation year doctors to assist the NHS during the COVID pandemic.³ Such steps are highly necessary and should be encouraged worldwide and also to not let us not suffer academically and clinically. Another article that I came across says that one fourth of the surveyed medical students felt discouraged during the COVID-19 quarantine period.⁴ This will affect the mental well-being of students and their psychological learning. I know that we are dealing with pandemic but this issue should be highlighted so that we can also play our role in the well-being of our community!

References

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