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17 CORD COVID-19 Task Force Report on the Pandemic Impact on Undergraduate Medical Education

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Learning Objectives: We sought to describe the effects of COVID-19 on UME within EM.

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic has affected multiple aspects of Undergraduate Medical Education (UME) beyond infection and illness. Many universities, medical schools, and hospitals instituted policy changes around educational gatherings and clinical participation. State-issued travel restrictions impacted both rotations and altered the Match process.

Objectives: We sought to describe the effects of COVID-19 on UME within EM.

Methods: CORD chartered a COVID-19 Task Force comprised of 18 selected educators to explore the pandemic’s impact on EM. A Modified Delphi process was used to develop multiple survey instruments. This process included a literature search for validated questions and internal piloting with iterative changes. After IRB approval, the UME survey was distributed to members of CORD during the 2021 Academic Assembly. Using SPSS v26, a descriptive analysis was performed.

Results: Sixty-three individuals responded to the UME survey, with 27 (42.9%) program directors (PDs), 19 (30.2%) assistant/associate PDs, 5 (7.9%) core faculty, 5 (7.9%) clerkship directors, 4 (6.3%) residents/fellows and 3 others (vice chair of education, educational researcher, unknown). Most respondents were white (84.1%) and approximately half identified as women (50.8%). Table 1 provides means and standard deviations for statements displayed from most to least important.

Conclusions: The positive financial impact on medical students was described as the greatest benefit of the pandemic. Virtual technology was varied in its impact: positive for conferences and interviewing but negative as a surrogate for clinical rotations or the ability for students to evaluate residency program culture. The top challenge facing UME was the removal of students from clinical rotations. This may impact residency programs, requiring them to remediate those skills. A limitation of this geographically broad cohort was the number of respondents.

Table 1. Undergraduate medical education benefits and challenges.

Item	Mean	SD
<i>UME Benefits – Rank 1 to 6 with 1 being most important.</i>		
Decreased financial burden of away rotations/interviews	2.53	1.76
Increased utilization of asynchronous learning	3.08	1.49
Use of videoconferencing programs (Zoom, etc.)	3.29	1.61
Re-evaluation of current education modalities for students	3.63	1.68
Ability to attend virtual education sessions from a variety of departments/programs	3.69	1.58
Time for students to participate in scholarly activity	4.77	1.29
<i>UME Challenges – Rank 1 to 7 with 1 being most important.</i>		
Students pulled from clinical rotations	1.40	0.88
How students get the “fit” of the program over the virtual platform	3.32	1.61
Use of virtual rotations while students were pulled from clinical experiences	4.18	1.47
Restrictions on simulation activities	4.45	1.73
Inability to host in-person lecture	4.58	1.65
Virtual interviews	4.70	2.00
Students having to remediate required clinical rotations prior to 4th year electives	5.30	1.77

SD = Standard Deviation

UME = Undergraduate Medical Education

18 FOAM authorship: Who’s teaching the learners?

Andrew Grock, Tiffany Fan, Max Berger, Jeff Riddell

Learning Objectives: Of all posts from the top 25 blogs in 2020, more than half came from six sites, most contained clinical content, and authors were largely North American male academics with MD degrees. Learners, content-creators, and educators must recognize these limitations in utilizing online educational content.

Background: While use of Free Open Access Medical Education (FOAM) content has grown over the last decade, concerns about quality assessment remain. Given the disconnect between the high utilization of these resources by learners and the low barriers and oversight to publishing, the authors of FOAM resources require further scrutiny.

Objectives: We sought to describe the production and authorship characteristics of the most impactful FOAM blogs.

Methods: Based on previous studies, a classification system for post content was developed by two authors with content expertise in online educational resources. We included 12 months (August, 2019 - May, 2021) of blog posts from each of the top 25 sites in the 2020 social media index (SMI). We recorded the following: number of posts per site and per author, types of post; and author related details such as gender, title, affiliation, degree, location of practice and type of practice (academic, community, or hybrid). Gender was determined based on an online identification tool (genderchecker.com).

Results: We identified 2,141 posts by 1,001 authors, with more than half produced by six websites: EM Docs (266), Life in the Fast Lane (232), EMCrit (188), ALiEM (185),