

Online classes during Covid 19 Pandemic: A Student's Perspective

Tanya Agarwal*, Soniya Gupta

Associate Professor, Department of Anatomy, Rama Medical College Hapur -245304(U.P), India

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Abstract:

Background: In the wake of corona pandemic, online classes became need of hour to fulfill the educational requirement of ongoing batches without much waste of time. **Context & purpose:** Educational institutes had to resort to these online classes without adequate preparation & infrastructure. So, the need to assess the quality of online classes was felt. **Results:** Majority of students were in favour of offline classes because that resulted in better learning outcome. **Conclusion:** No matter how much enthusiastic & techno friendly facilities for online classes are available. Offline face- face interaction and hands on practical training cannot be replaced in subjects like Anatomy.

Keywords: Online classes, Offline classes, Pandemic

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Introduction

Before the advent of internet the more prevalent mode of teaching was offline. At present the world is reeling under covid 19 pandemic 2nd or 3rd wave. During these unprecedented times when in India & across the globe lockdowns are stringently being imposed by the national government world over, the only option left with teachers in general and medical faculty in particular is to hold classes for their students by taking assistance from technology i.e to resort to online teaching methods.[1]

Internet was made available for public usage in India in august 1995 though it is available for educational & research purpose since 1986. The usage of online learning has undergone a marked increase since 2012.

Online- learning has a well-established role in medical education and it has been found to be effective in enhancing learning and is well accepted by students. Online-learning can be used both as a stand-alone teaching tool and in a blended learning [2]

The traditional teaching, which involves face-to-face interactions between the students and the teacher Its major advantage is that it provides a very motivating environment for the learners and has the potential to engross even the most disinterested learner by way of giving personal attention.[1]

Before the onset of pandemic online method of teaching was used as additional tool of learning in the form of satellite coaching classes, You tube videos, 3D Images & other online platforms provided by various coaching classes in the form of prerecorded classes, demonstrations of various practical aspect of the subject concerned but these kinds of platforms are well equipped for online teaching but in the face of present pandemic the normal colleges which resort to offline mode of classes have to suddenly Switch over for online mode without adequate preparation of audio visual devices so quality control is always a question mark .

Moreover under graduate first year students who are in the phase of grasping basic concepts find It difficult to learn without hands on training in the form of dissection hall and other practical labs so giving the students a sound foundation becomes a challenge for the faculty members.

*Correspondence

Dr. Tanya Agarwal

Associate professor, Department of Anatomy, Rama Medical College Hapur -245304(U.P), India.

E-mail: tanyaagarwal1860@gmail.com

Keeping In mind all the pros and cons of the online teaching a study is planned to analyze student's perspective and to undertake the measure to improve the quality of online classes.

Material and methods

A self styled & semi structured questionnaire containing 10 questions was given to the 150 students of 2020 batch in Rama medical college Out of 150 students only 100 students attempted the questionnaire.

There answers were analyzed and suggestions were noted down in an attempt to improve the quality of existing online classes so that students are benefited more & gap between online & offline can be bridged.

Inclusion criteria: First year MBBS students, who underwent both, classroom teaching from October 2020 till March 2021 followed by online teaching during April 2021 to June 2021.

Exclusion criteria: The students that did not give consent or did not attend the respective classroom and online teaching sessions.

Results

The study was performed in students of 2020 batch. Data was compiled in excel sheet, and results were obtained. Out of 150 students, 100 students submitted the answers of questionnaires.

Table 1: showing numbers of students in favour of online/offline classes in terms of below mentioned characteristics

Characteristics	Number of students in favour of online classes	Number of students in favour of offline classes	Number of students in favour of both type of classes
User friendly	48	48	4
Convenient for self study	96	4	0
Feeling more enthusiastic with	16	72	12
Comfortable mode	32	52	16

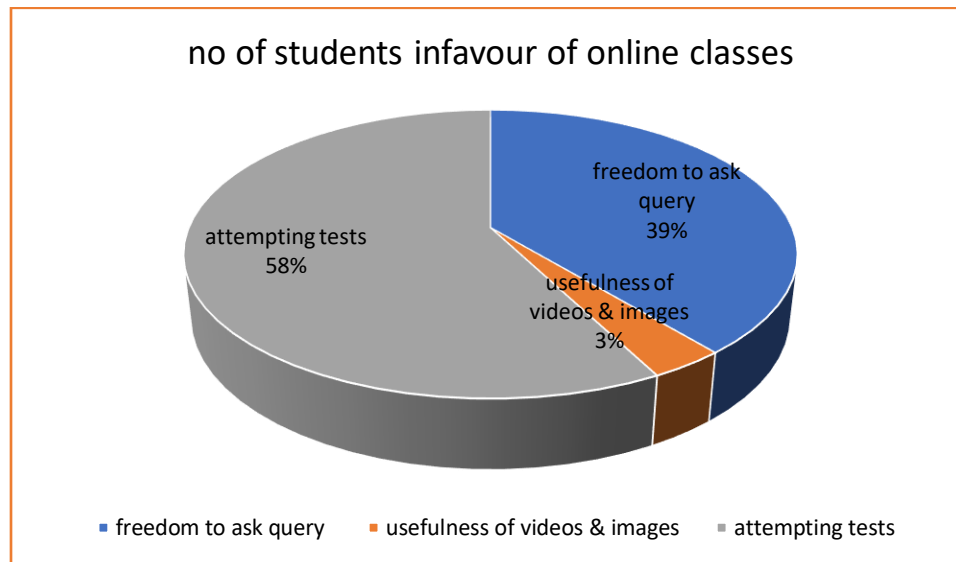


Fig 1: showing student's perspective for online classes

48 students found online classes user friendly and 48 students found offline classes user friendly. 4 students had no issues with both the type of classes.

Majority of students (about 92) were of view that they get more time for self study with online platform, only 4 students found offline mode much better for self study.

Mostly all the students (96) were of the opinion that online practical videos & 3 D images were no substitute for hands on cadaveric dissection in Anatomy. Only for 4 students both the modes were equally good.

For 72 students, offline classes were more interactive, for other 16 students online sessions were more interactive. Remaining 12 students were equally at ease with both the modes.

As far as enthusiasm is concerned, 52 were feeling more zeal with offline classes, 32 with online and remaining 16 with both the modes. 92 students were able to ask their queries online. Remaining 8 were finding it difficult online.

When asked about, ability to attempt tests & assignments online, 68 students gave positive response 28 responded in negative.

Discussion

Majority of the students were of the opinion that offline classes were more useful and interesting and were imparting better knowledge though online classes are convenient less time consuming safe and cost effective but overall output was better for offline classes. The major limiting factor for online classes were poor network connection in interior of the country, lack of hands on training for practical and absence of competitive atmosphere at home due to lack of peer group & and teacher's support and guidance & motivation.

List of important suggestions from students-

1. To use Zoom classes instead of go to meeting used by RMCH Hapur, because it doesn't allow outsiders to join in.
2. To give hands out or pdf of the class
3. To discuss the class assignments and test papers other than usual class and practical.
4. To go on a slightly slower pace if possible
5. As normal teacher taught interaction was not possible so occasionally a 10-15 minutes session of informal interaction should be conducted
6. More time should be dedicated to practical aspect than theory

7. Class test should be subjective instead of Multiple choice questions so that habit of writing is retained.
8. According to few students Offline mode motivates them to push themselves through all the obstacles and distractions. Seeing and meeting wonderful professionals everyday motivates them to do better and helps them to idolise these professionals
9. lectures should be locked so that only batchmates can attend it and no outsiders who create nuisance-
10. During online classes students can save ppts & diagrams for future reference

According to Chauhan et al [3] a higher percentage of students were of the opinion that blended mode of teaching, means offline classes followed by online session gives better results in terms of students learning.

According to Rawat & Singh [1] no clearcut superiority of any one mode of teaching could be established.

According to Donald Clark [4] traditional sheep dip methods of learning are poor on reinforcements and e- learning is helpful in reinforcement, provided the students are adequately motivated.

Developing good communication and consulting skill is fundamental for improving health outcomes and developing an effective therapeutic relationship.[5] According to Warnecke and Pearson E-learning should be utilized in addition to face to face teaching for flexibility in delivery of medical education.[6]

According to Ravitheja et al[7], students preferred classroom teaching over online teaching for anatomy subject.

According to Majda Sebbani et al, total of 41.4% students responded that they prefer the hybrid form (26.1 were for face to face form and 29% for online only) and 68.7 % of students recommended continuing Distance learning even after pandemic. [9]

Findings of study done by Doherty et al suggest that the key barriers which affect the development and implementation of online learning in medical education include time constraints, poor technical skills, inadequate infrastructure, absence of institutional strategies and support and negative attitudes of all involved.[10]

In the present study, 92% students opine that online mode of teaching is better for theoretical aspects while 96% of students stated that hands on cadaveric dissection is a must.

According to study performed by Mahmoud Al Balas et al 52.2% students were of view that distance e-learning can replace traditional class learning in delivering theoretical knowledge while 78.6%

students replied that distance e-learning will represent a major challenge to acquire adequate clinical medical skills.

In present study, 52% of students felt more enthusiastic with offline mode of teaching, reasons being distractions at home & surroundings were not conducive for studies. Only 32% feel more enthusiasm with online mode. While 16% felt the need of blended method.

Nirav Nimavat et al suggested that student's participation can be increased in online teaching by using quizzes, mini assignments, giving marks for questions, limiting the texts in slide.[12]

According to present study, preferred mode of teaching for medical students remain either offline or blended But in the present circumstances online mode of teaching is not an option but a necessity and it needs to be improved by adopting various ed technologies.

Conclusion

Online videos and images cannot replace hands- on cadaveric dissections & tailor made personalized demonstrations . Though, online platform provide more time for self study & it is easier to ask queries online. Offline studies were found to be more interactive & problem solving by the students. College premises, dissection hall, visits to clinical departments, interaction with seniors, batchmates & faculty members helps in overall development of a medical student, which are missing in online studies. But during pandemic time, these online classes are only option left; they can be made better by using good software tool for the classes, providing good quality videos& attaching graphic board with laptop or by using touch screen laptop which enables use of white board just like chalk & board method of offline classes. So, in conclusion online classes can be made at par with offline classes by paying more attention to above mentioned aspects. And once this crisis time of pandemic is over instead of this stand alone method of online or offline teaching, we can switch over to blended method of classes, meaning thereby is usual offline classes can be reinforced by online classes as well for better learning outcome especially for the demanding subjects like Anatomy.

Acknowledgement

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