Do the Advantages Overweight the Disadvantages of Online Teaching: Student's Point of View?

Kusum Singla[1], Munish Kumar[2], ManjuChenicherri[3], Sameena Khan[4]

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry, Army College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India
[2]Associate Professor, Department of Anaesthesiology and Critical Care, Command Hospital, Lucknow, India
[3]Assistant Professor, Department of Physiology, Army College of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, India
[4]Assistant Professor, Department of Microbiology, DY Patil Medical College, Pune, India

Abstract

Objectives: To evaluate the advantages as well as disadvantages of online teaching. To determine whether the advantages overweight the disadvantages of online teaching.

Material and methods: This survey was conducted at the Army College of Medical Sciences, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi, India. As the online teaching especially for medical students took heights during the pandemic in 2020 for the first time so, all 100 students of first professional MBBS (2019 batch) were included in the study. A cross-sectional survey using an anonymous self-administered online questionnaire was issued as the tool for the study.

Results: A total of 92 students submitted the answers. Out of 92 participants 44 (47.8%) were males and 48 (52.2%) were females. 81 students were using mobile phones for attending their online classes whereas only 11 students used laptops as their mode of communication. 47 students considered online studies more flexible in comparison to offline studies and 43 respondents considered those classes more convenient. More than 75% students found offline learning better that online teaching.

Conclusion: Though online teaching was salutary in pandemic time but to some extent it may not contend with offline in certain angles. In present survey student's point of view considered offline classes better than online classes.

Introduction

Covid-19 has been declared as a pandemic on March 11, 2020 by World Health Organization (WHO). After observing the spread of Covid, it was advised to maintain social distancing as the first step of prevention by WHO. This led to the

lockdown by all the countries.[1] Sudden closure of education sectors at all the levels including destroyed the schedule of the students and institutions, leading to the dilemma in coping up with the worsening and indefinite situation. As we know that the necessity is the mother of invention, COVID-19 has created many challenges as well as opportunities for the institutes to strengthen their technological knowledge, skill and infrastructure by adopting different digital modes of learning [2]. A ray of hope for teachers, students and to the parents to continue their educational activities through online. Teachers started delivering their lectures through video conferencing using different Apps like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Google meet, Whatsapp, etc [1], but accepting & following these new methods were challenging not only for students but also for teachers. To overcome this challenge various government as well as private organizations came together to try their best to assist each other by providing training to the teachers to use online Apps, not only by skilling but also motivating teachers as well as students and their parents.[3] The effectiveness of online learning is influenced by many factors. Some factors have benefits over traditional pen-pencil learning Flexibility of time (like learning environment according to the comfort zone, improved technical skills, Improved self-discipline) whereas some factors create barriers (e.g Poor internet access, inadequate technology and skills, Computer anxiety, Cost, More requirement of self-motivation, Spending more time on screen can affect health) like the two sides of the coin. Medical institutions all over the world are experiencing online teaching for medical education of students including undergraduate and postgraduate for the first time in history. The aim of this survey was to evaluate the advantages as well as disadvantages of online teaching that would be helpful in the implementation of better learning and teaching practices in the future. This study will also be a step forward for detection and eradication of various barriers of online teaching programs.

Methodology

This survey was conducted at the Army College of Medical Sciences, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi, India. As the online teaching especially for medical students took heights during the pandemic in 2020 for the first time so, all 100 students of first professional (MBBS 2019 batch) were included in the study. A cross-sectional survey using an anonymous self-administered online questionnaire was issued as the tool for the study. Questions were prepared on the basis of online classes taken and assignments given to the students. Questionnaire was given using Google forms. Motive of the study was explained to students.

Although 100 students of MBBS 2019 batch were given the questionnaire, only 92 learners actually answered the questions.

Results

Out of total 92 participants 44 (47.8%) were males and 48 (52.2%) were females (Fig-1).54 students (58.7%) are from the urban area and rest of them are from rural area. If we see the mode of communication 81 students were using mobile phones for attending their online classes whereas only 11 students used laptops. (Fig-2)
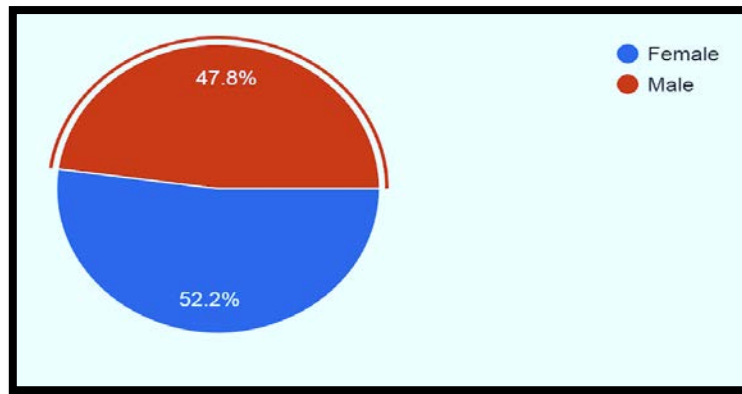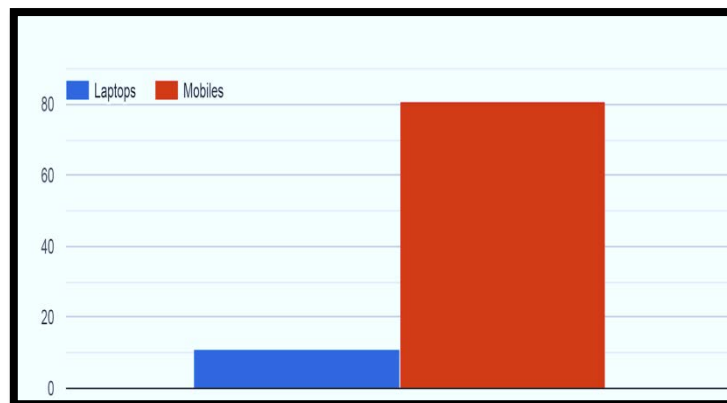
Figure 1: Gender distribution

Figure 2: Communication Means

As students were asked about their opinions regarding the barriers of online study. Some of the responses were like Network issue, technical issues, attitude towards assignment is casual as it was similar to open book test, Lack of interaction - in-person teaching is better. Questions were also there on the barriers of online teaching and online assignments.27 students think that communication problem is there in online teaching whereas according to 42 students, it may be the problem.46 (50%) consider that network issue is the problem and 37 students consider it as may be the problem (Fig-3). 44 students find online teaching costly and traditional teaching without gadgets. (Fig-4). 63 students think regarding distracting environment at home for online studies.
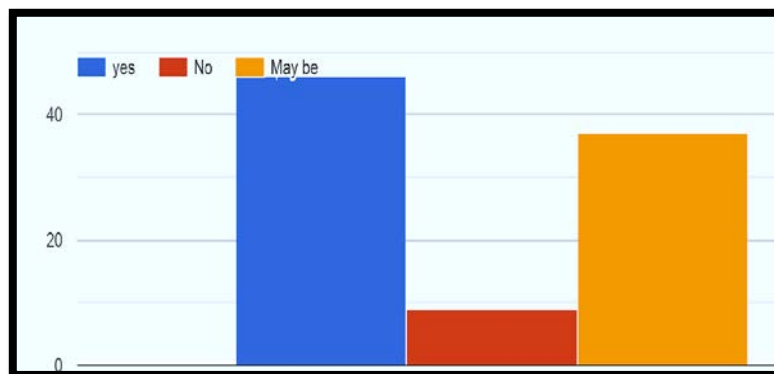

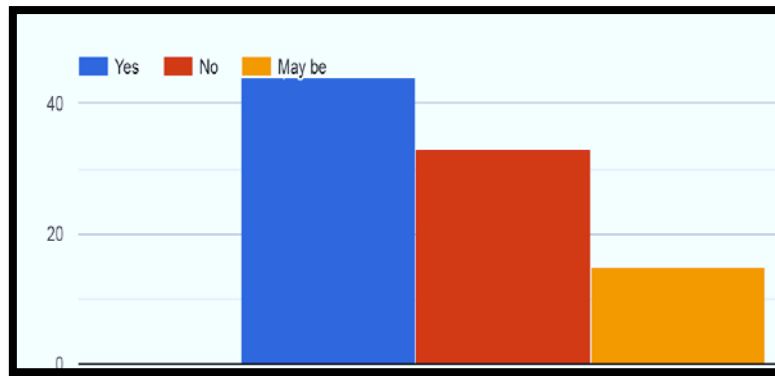**Figure 3: Accessibility to Network**

Figure 4: More costly than traditional methods without gadgets

Student's opinions regarding the advantages of online studies were like no attendance problems, Flexible, convenient, more time for self-studies, less hectic and less burdensome.

Regarding the advantages of online studies, 47 students consider online studies more flexible. 43 respondents consider it more convenient. According to 66 students, it is the easy way of getting attendance as compared to traditional methods. 53 students disagreed with the question asked whether there is improvement of the self-discipline during online studies. 40 respondents agree that online classes help for learning technical skills.

More than 75% students found offline learning better that online teaching. As sitting in front of mobile screen leads to restlessness, irritation, maintains punctuality, more focused and disciplined.

Rural areas have bad network connectivity which is responsible for difficulty in attending classes & doing assignments. Every house has not the environment for studying properly. Classrooms are much better as those give more peaceful environment for studying.
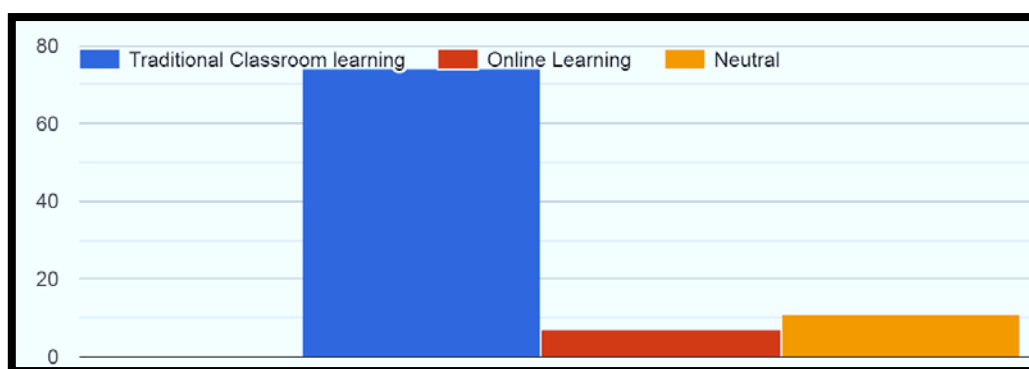

Figure 5: which way of learning you like

Discussion

Observing the corona pandemic situation, WHO advised to maintain the social distance at all the levels as first line of prevention. Online studies gave a ray of hope to both teachers and students to continue their classes [1] but the medical profession is always a challenging one that requires lot of commitment, determination, dedication and most importantly acquisition of clinical skills and lifelong learning attitude. 75% students found offline learning better than online teaching as interaction is more. These results were

consistent with the study by Ni [4] which considered communicative interaction between teachers and students as an important part of traditional pen pencil teaching. The effectiveness could be influenced by various peculiar characteristics of students like gender [5]; Similar, to our study having 44 (47.8%) males and 48 (52.2%) females out of 92 participants, satisfaction [6]; similar to our survey where more than 75% students found offline learning better than online teaching, and attitude[7,8]; like in the present survey, 27 students found communication as the problem during online teaching while other considered it as more convenient and flexible. One of our previous study [9] founds that 45 students still like the old conventional pen pencil method for writing their assignment as compared to 37 students likes direct typing and rest of them were neutral in their views out of 98 students as similar to present study where More than 75% students found offline learning better that online teaching. Ghoshal B [3] had also included in their study that online teaching requires use of devices like computers, laptops or mobile phones that affect posture, causes eye strain and stressful as compared to offline mode of teaching. Observations of this study were similar to our survey where more than 80% students used mobile phones and complained of eye strain and headache. Various advantage of online classes as per student's opinion included more flexibility, more convenience, better technical skills, and easy way of getting attendance and cheating.

Conclusion:

Sudden change in mode of teaching from traditional black board to online was challenging for teachers, students as well as parents especially in medical education. Accepting change is in human behavior and urgency leads to new inventions. Though online teaching was salutary in this pandemic time but to some extent it may not contend with offline in certain angles like student direct interaction with their teachers as well as friends, self-disciplined, providing more stress-free environment peculiarly in medical field where acquisition of skills and practical knowledge is more important. Overall, it suggests that as every coin has two sides similarly online classes have both positive as well as negative factors. However, in our study, student's point of view considered offline teaching better than online. More research is required to reach to the firm conclusion that whether the advantages overweight the disadvantages of online teaching.

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