

# Blended learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Medical student perceptions and attitudes to e- learning

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## Abstract

This survey was designed to assess students' views and gain feedback on newly introduced blended learning during the Covid-19 pandemic.

*Methods:* A cross-sectional online voluntary survey recruited students in the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland (RCSI) during the 2020/2021 academic year. Questions included quantitative and qualitative sections. Responses were collected anonymously, data was analysed using Stata V16.1.

*Results:* Seventy two (21%) student responses were obtained. Most students had not received training in online education. Less than half of the students (31) felt that online teaching met their educational requirements and nearly 60% (40) felt that it had a negative impact on interactions with peers. Less than a third (19) agreed that online teaching can be used as a long-term alternative to face-to-face teaching.

*Conclusion:* The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major effect on medical education internationally. New teaching approaches were implemented in response to government guidelines. A move towards blended learning was necessary during the pandemic. This study identified a number of educational barriers that affected students' perception and experience of blended learning. This feedback will inform the structure of future academic years.

**Keywords:** Blended learning, Covid-19, Students' views, Online teaching, Medical education