

A Quantitative Examination of Medical Students' Perception of Medical Education during a Pandemic

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Abstract

In response to Covid 19 and in line with government restrictions, Trinity College Dublin (TCD) implemented a hybrid model of education for medical students with online delivery of lectures and in-person small group face-to-face teaching. The aim of the study was to assess first year medical students' attitudes to the changed teaching method, to determine any positive or negative outcomes of this change and to explore their experience of medical school during a pandemic. A census study of TCD first year medical students enrolled for September 2020 using mixed methods online survey methodology. The study protocol was approved by the TCD Ethics Committee. The quantitative data was analysed using SPSS and reported here. 61% of students reported they had adjusted to online learning (OL), however only 24% agreed they had participated in class with questions/comments just as in face-to-face classes. 62.5% of students stated they attended OL teaching as/more frequently than face to face teaching, with 54% finding online lectures more convenient. 74% of students missed in-person communication with lecturers. Overall, technology resources were not problematic. 74% of respondents felt that the TCD Medical School adapted well to hybrid learning but only 24% felt that most teachers verified lessons were understood. A majority (83%) of students felt isolated during online learning. This study offers valuable insight to the benefits and drawbacks of online education implemented on an emergency basis because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Findings of this study contribute timely information to the current discussion on hybrid learning.

Keywords: Covid-19; Medical School; Student; Experience