

Effective Teaching Strategies in Oral Medicine and Radiology during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Purnachandrarao Naik N*

Oral Medicine and Radiology Department, Sibar Institute of Dental Sciences, India

***Corresponding Author:** Purnachandrarao Naik N, Oral Medicine and Radiology Department, Sibar Institute of Dental Sciences, India.

Received: March 02, 2021; **Published:** April 27, 2021

In view of COVID-19, due to the deferment of classroom teachings by all institutions of the most affected countries of the world, the necessity to implement and upgrade distance learning has become indispensable. Thus, several challenges have arisen for sustaining teaching around the world during this pandemic of COVID-19. New perspectives regarding a change in face-to-face activities, social isolation, and the reformulation of clinical accomplishments result in an evolution toward e-learning and e-teaching processes.

The main objectives of teaching methodologies during COVID -19

1. For ensuring effective education in the field of Oral Medicine and Radiology
2. To minimize the risks of the document or patient -mediated transmission from an infected individual.
3. To maintain natural physical distance and avoid mass gatherings while still maintaining the workforce needed to provide clinical patient care.
4. Effective teaching methodologies to improvise preclinical work and different clinical skills to the students.

Effective teaching methods in oral medicine

Current perspectives for dental education in the COVID-19 era

Electronic platforms for theoretical education: The COVID 19 catastrophe naked that we have underrated the role of e-oral health, education, and services, including teledentistry, which is incipient. Educational electronic platforms developed by educational institutes are now an official substitute for non-classroom activities. One such online platform which was extensively used in line with international standards is Moodle, which is promoting blended-learning to augment student training by the possibilities of sharing educational material, videos, conducting forum discussions, assessments, tasks, and establishing individual communication with students.

Depending on the quality of the internet connection there are multiple open platforms, and paid platforms available such as Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Google Classroom and Hangout are interesting alternatives to the conventional classrooms. These online platforms allow up to around 250 simultaneous participants, with the probability of sharing the presenter's screen, In addition, the activities can be recorded and securely stored in Google Drive or Google Classroom for further student/teacher reference.

Other universal social media platforms, such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube are also widely used as an alternative in the current scenario. These digital platforms are found to be effective in

- Effective patient screening
- Identifying suspicious lesions and oral diagnosis
- Follow-up of the ongoing treatment and critical cases
- Counseling of the patients.

These platforms permit students to discuss the topics more willingly and compliantly, with less rigid time and place restraints and could be beneficial in teaching the theoretical aspects of medical emergencies in dental practice. Live broadcasting on YouTube and discussing via WhatsApp fund appears to be a more effective method of teaching and learning and case discussion in oral medicine and radiology, but, finally the extensive usage of these platforms could lead to student distractions and deviations.

Electronic platforms for practical/clinical education

The major concern in this Covid 19 pandemic is an interruption of education related to preclinical and clinical activities in oral medicine and radiology which is the most important aspect to become an oral medicine expert. Case-based discussions are an essential learning strategy in specialties like oral medicine and radiology. Virtual patient (VP)-based learning comprises of simulating clinical cases to improve students' skills in decision making and diagnosis.

Case-based clinical discussions in oral medicine can also be attained using various readily available social media digital platforms, such as YouTube, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Pinterest. Live broadcasting on YouTube and discussing via WhatsApp is one of the effective teachings and learning methods that can be incorporated in oral medicine and radiology. Nevertheless, regarding teaching activities in oral medicine clinics, no e-learning strategies can replace experience with patients.

Effective teaching methods in oral radiology

Current perspectives for dental education in the COVID-19 era

Oral Radiology teaching includes theoretical and practical classes which include image interpretations and performance of radiographic techniques. In the post-pandemic scenario, theoretical accomplishments can be performed remotely, but, furthermore, e-learning may be as effective as traditional classroom methods in students' knowledge gain and clinical procedures performed in Oral Radiology. Thus, the development of institutional digital platforms is paramount significant to provide imaging transfer, remote diagnosis, results checking, and clinical cases discussion by students which may play an important role in oral radiology in this Covid era.

Drawbacks of E-learning during COVID-19

- Unequal student access to quality internet can compromise accomplishment in remote activities.
- The abrupt start of e-learning can be a stressor for students, considering that not everyone will adequately adapt to this teaching modality.
- Lack of adequate knowledge regarding different software used during Covid 19 pandemic.
- Audiovisual problem due to frequent interruption of the internet.
- Digital eye (Eyesight and retinal problems etc..) - is one of the major concerns in today's era due to extensive usage of digital platforms that damages the retina.

- Lack of access to the attention of the audience.
- An accidental back button press would log out from the digital platform.
- Student deviation and miss utilization of the internet.

Future perspectives in effective teaching and learning process

- We should rethink our curriculum and our way of delivering lectures in adequation with this current reality.
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlights a need for further research in this area, to educate students and strengthen our speciality more expansively.
- Our educational dental councils should be enthused to formulate new institutional policies that generate novel options for students and professors in our speciality.
- Every dental college administration must plan strategies to keep staff and students updated and motivated.
- To return to normal clinical activities, major investments must be made in dental colleges to acclimatize to the new biosafety reality of the post-COVID 19 pandemic.
- Although using physical means in face-to-face education may be a simpler communication modality for clinical case-based discussions; remote, internet-based discussions on virtual platforms enable a more relaxed discussion ambience.

“Do something different. Try a new way of doing something”.

Volume 20 Issue 5 May 2021

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