

Impacts of online learning: Evaluation of the graduating nursing students

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: The COVID-19 pandemic declared in March 2020 has disrupted education at all levels, forcing it to switch to online learning. Prompt actions were taken by the Faculty of Medicine, UniKL RCMP, to change the physical classroom teaching to online learning in ensuring that medical and nursing education can be carried out during the pandemic and students were able to graduate on time. **Objective:** To explore the final year of graduating Nursing students' experiences in online learning and the effects of the pandemic on their education. **Materials and methods:** A total of 52 students from the graduating cohort of January Semester 2022 were invited to provide feedback on the Nursing education conducted in the "new normal" after they have sat for the Malaysian Nursing Board Examination. Evaluation forms were given and explained to students, areas evaluated include factors that support or hinder online learning, their experiences, and effects on their education. A total of 47 completed evaluation forms were received. **Results and conclusion:** Over 95% of students perceived online learning as less effective and preferred to learn in the conventional method of face-to-face classes. The impact of the pandemic has caused multiple stressors in lives including financial concerns, lack of family and peer support, feeling alone and isolated, role confusion, and conflicts between home and college environments when studying online. They have difficulty understanding the diseases' pathophysiology and nursing management when learning in the virtual environment, which leads to a loss of interest or failure to stay focused in their study. Technical challenges, intermittent or poor internet connectivity, lack of student engagement, and camera usage remains the main limitations of online learning. Nursing education was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The evaluation showed some negative impacts of online learning among the students who preferred to learn in traditional face-to-face classes. However, students' and lecturers' experiences, their readiness for online teaching and learning, their effectiveness, technical support, and resources needed in this new learning platform need further evaluation.