

# Perception of medical students towards COVID-19 outbreak and Movement Control Order (MCO) in Malaysia and impact on education

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## **ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** The Movement Control Order (MCO) was implemented in Malaysia as a response to the COVID-19 pandemic leading to the closure of public premises, including educational institutions. **Methods:** A total of 772 clinical undergraduate students from the Faculty of Medicine at the National University of Malaysia participated in the study. **Results:** The study found that the majority of students were aware of the mode of transmission, seriousness, testing methods, and local scenario of COVID-19. While the students generally supported the implementation of MCO and received sufficient information from government authorities, many also experienced significant levels of stress, depression, and anxiety during this period. The study also revealed that students had concerns about the impact of the MCO on their academic performance and the quality of online learning compared to face-to-face classes. The readiness of students for online teaching and learning was assessed, and it was found that a small percentage of students did not own electronic devices or had slow internet connectivity. Despite the availability of online platforms, some students reported dissatisfaction with the quality of online learning. The study further analyzed the factors influencing students' perception of the MCO, learning support, and learning anxiety. Age, gender, ethnicity, information source, and teaching platform were found to have significant effects on students' perceptions. **Conclusion:** The study underscores challenges faced by medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic in Malaysia, emphasizing the importance of addressing their mental well-being and maintaining educational quality. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and educational institutions to enhance support systems and improve online learning experiences.