

## Role of Tele-education by Online Webinars During COVID-19 Pandemic

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### Abstract

Education involves the spreading of knowledge from one person to another. Education involves the exchange of ideas between groups of people. However in the time of COVID-19 crisis when we could not conduct classes for large groups due to difficulty in keeping the social distance, we resorted to online webinars for imparting knowledge. We share our experience with the online webinars.

**Keywords:** Telemedicine; COVID-19; Corona pandemic; Tele-education; Webinars.

## INTRODUCTION

Telemedicine means the death of distance and it brings together patients and doctors across geographical borders for doctor patient interaction and treatment of ailments. It also allows for exchange of knowledge and experience between healthcare workers of different fields and specialities. During the COVID pandemic when maintaining social distance was the norm, there is difficulty in travel and arrangement of face to face classes for the

spread of knowledge. Hence it is important to use the various newer modalities of communication to bring together experts from various fields for the sharing of knowledge.

## METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic in a tertiary care center in the department of plastic surgery with departmental committee ethical approval. The classes were taken in collaboration with various faculties in various locations in the country. The classes included case discussions, seminar presentation, and journal discussions. The classes were taken using apps like Zoom, Goggle Meet, Skype etc. It was done using the department LED screen. Live interaction was possible with the help of microphone and PTZ camera.

The Tele-education was done using PTZ camera model SRG-120DU which has 12x optical zoom and high frame rate of 60fps, it can be connected to PC via USB 3.0, with wide angle of 71 degree, Pan



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:300 degree/sec, Tilt of 126 degree/sec. The classes were viewed in UF7700 series 4K ultra HD LED screen with resolution of 3840x2160. The audio aid used for interacting was PCS-A1 omni directional microphone.

The classes were attended by the department faculties and the senior residents maintaining the social distancing within the room. Excess members apart from the people in the classroom were permitted to participate in the classes.

Via their smartphones. Time table was made containing the topic to be discussed and the timing of the webinar. Each webinar started with an introduction of the topic, presentation by a learned person and discussion, the moderator announced the topic for the next day and gave vote of thanks. The classes were held during the period of COVID-19 crisis which allowed keeping the norms of social distancing and also allowed for spread of knowledge. Feedback forms were collected from the participants at the end of class.

Question	Answer
1. Where you satisfied with the audio quality of the tele education class?	—
2. Where you satisfied with the video quality of tele education class?	—
3. Where you satisfied with the online interaction during the classes between the listener and the presenter??	—
4. Do you find this initiative cost-effective?	—
5. Do you find it useful in practicing social distancing at the time of COVID-19 Pandemic?	—
6. Would you recommend it to be used by other healthcare institutes?	—

## RESULTS

All the doctors felt the classes were highly informative and allowed for live interaction. It also helped to maintain the social distancing.

## DISCUSSION

WHO defines telemedicine as “The delivery of health care services, where distance is a critical factor, by all health care professionals using information and communication technologies for the exchange of valid information for diagnosis, treatment and prevention of disease and injuries, research and evaluation, and for the continuing education of health care providers, all in the interests of advancing the health of individuals and their communities”.<sup>1</sup> Telemedicine practice allows for the prevention of transmission of diseases and reducing the risks to both health care workers and patients. Unnecessary exposure of the health care workers can be avoided using telemedicine. It provides rapid access to health care workers who may not be available in person. In addition, it also makes available hands and provides physical care at the respective health institutions.<sup>2</sup>

Distance learning is defined as: any educational or learning process or system in which the teacher and instructor are separated geographically or in time from his or her students; or in which students are separated from other students or educational resources.<sup>3-5</sup> Distance learning is a concept of learning that incorporates various technologies and media. Within the realm, different video, audio and computer tele-conferencing systems, and Computer Based Training, Computer Managed Instructional systems and other media



**Fig. 1:** Faculty and residents listening to class maintaining social distance

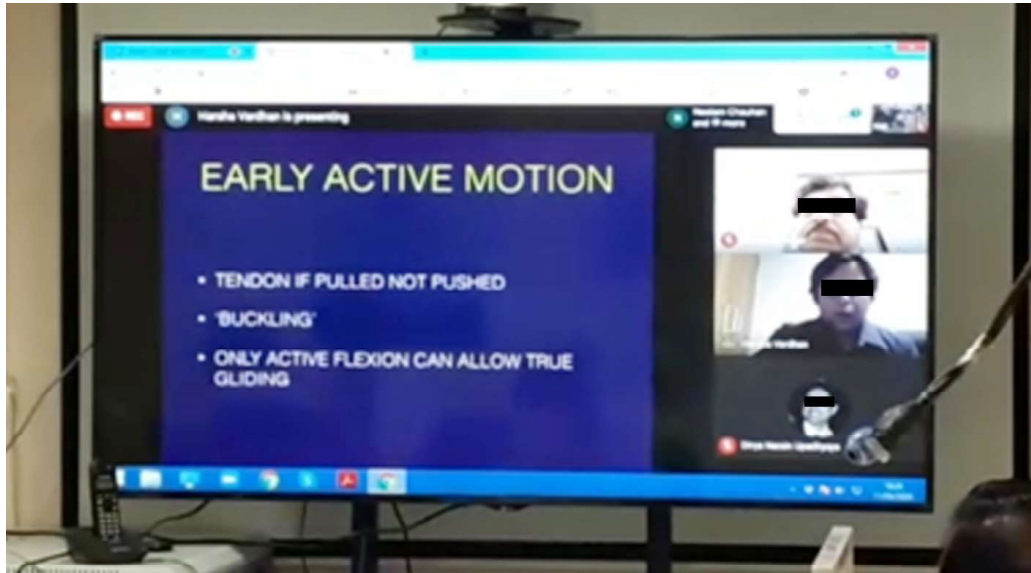


Fig. 2: Online webinars with interaction between the presenter and the listeners

are being unified technologically, instructionally and organizationally. The tele education concept crosses all borders among institutions both public and private, at any level of education, to anywhere including institutions, workplaces and the home. Tele-education, tele-teaching, tele-training, tele-mentoring, and tele-accreditation are now common practice.

## CONCLUSION

We found online webinars were highly informative and allowed for interactive sessions among faculties separated by geographical boundaries and should be implemented not only in COVID-19 period but also in regular times. The disadvantages were the need for costly infrastructure, problems with the network connections etc. The advantage was that the classes could be recorded and can be heard again for people who could not attend online, or for revision of the topic discussed. It also allows for people in different parts of the world to participate and interact with each other.

## DECLARATIONS

### *Acknowledgment*

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