

32. **STUDENT PERSPECTIVES ON E-LEARNING IN A MALAYSIAN MEDICAL COLLEGE ONE YEAR INTO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY**

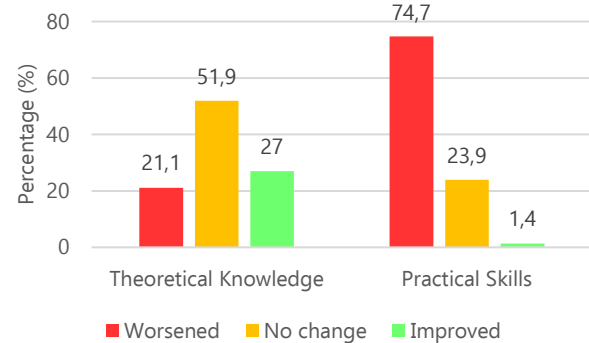
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 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0JIMP5Fyl7s&t=8055s>

INTRODUCTION: During the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, physical in-person classes in Newcastle University Medicine Malaysia (NUMed) were replaced with e-learning. Teaching in NUMed was being delivered online during COVID-19 pandemic for the last one and a half academic years (18 March 2020 – June 2021) due to the strict lockdowns and physical distancing measures in place, limited in-person sessions on campus, and disrupted hospital attachments. There was concern over the effectiveness and satisfaction with e-learning amongst our students, and how this affects their overall academic performance. Our study aims to explore students' e-learning experiences and its perceived benefits and challenges during the pandemic. **METHODS:** 285 students participated in this cross-sectional study using a convenience sampling method. Participants completed a self-administered online questionnaire via an email invitation between July 12th and August 12th, 2021 which comprised of sociodemographic characteristics and experiences with e-learning. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics and Spearman's correlation tests were used to identify correlation between students' e-learning experiences, the effects of e-learning, and academic performance. **RESULTS:** Most students used laptops (n=275, 96.5%) for e-learning and owned at least two electronic devices (n=245, 86%). Over half of our students (n=148, 51.9%) reported their theoretical knowledge remains unchanged, while about three-quarters (n=213, 74.7%) perceived practical skills to have worsened. Students preferred paper-based exams (n=170, 59.6%) and objectively formatted online exams (n=193, 67.7%). Since transitioning to e-learning, the majority of students (n=207, 72.6%) reported difficulties studying online and were unsatisfied with their academic performance (n=166, 58.2%). Students preferred e-learning due to the lower risk of contracting COVID-19 (n=256, 89.8%), the convenience of online classes (n=244, 85.6%) and flexible schedules (n=219, 76.8%). However, the lack of patient contact (n=236, 82.8%), lecturer and peer interactions (n=234, 82.1%), and unreliable internet (n=201, 70.5%) made e-learning challenging. Students' experiences were generally affected by multiple factors encompassing personal, lecturer, and environmental aspects. **CONCLUSION:** E-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted students' academic performance, particularly practical skills and performance satisfaction. Therefore, the university should look towards addressing e-learning constraints and providing adequate support to improve students' educational experiences in the ongoing pandemic.

Figure. NUMed Students' Perceptions of Changes to Academic Performance after Transition to E-Learning during Academic Year 2020/2021.



Key words: Medical Education; Academic Performance; Clinical Skills; COVID-19; Medical Students (Source: MeSH-NLM)