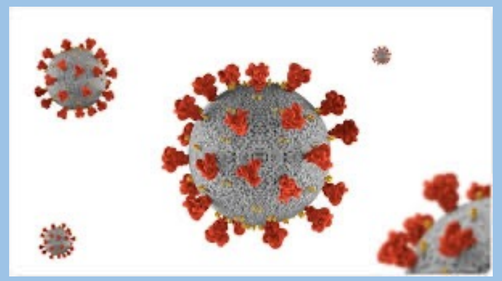
Can Social media bridge the gap for undergraduate in ophthalmic education during the COVID-19 era?

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Background

The UK education system has had to adapt to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes teaching to be delivered online with staff and students working from home. For medical students, this resulted in cancelled clinical placements and online assessments. For Ophthalmology, teaching has shifted from face-to-face to use online teaching platforms.



Conclusion

In the era of COVID-19, asynchronous learning has come into prominence and social media offers opportunities to fulfil the need of teaching delivered online. For Ophthalmology teaching, social media itself is not the solution for limited ophthalmic education, but a supplementation of information for students with limited exposure as a result of pandemic.

Instagram

Instagram is a platform which relies more on imaging than text. A survey of 1520 adults in the United States in 2016 showed, 59% of Instagram users are between the ages 18 and 29 years old. The platform relies minimally on text but more on images which is particularly useful in Ophthalmology, a specialty that relies heavily on imaging and visual methods of teaching.

Twitter

With over 330 million active users, Twitter presents a unique opportunity for professional organisations in Ophthalmology and individuals interested in the field to share educational resources and update their community on new advances via sharing of new publications. With the character limit of 280, this allows information to be shared in a short, digestible and succinct approach.

Facebook

Studies assessing Facebook showed 25.5% of medical students use Facebook for education related content. Facebook used as a tool for Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) demonstrated engagement of an anatomy related Facebook page in 85.7% of medical students. But involvement in Facebook discussions in 19.8% of medical students.

YouTube

46% of users on YouTube are aged between 18-24 years old. Exemplified as a great platform to share video related ophthalmology learning tools. In Ophthalmology, YouTube is already used to share videos related to surgical procedures and online teaching content. However, the risk of commercial bias was demonstrated in 21% of videos in a study analysing 24 Ophthalmic YouTube videos.

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