

Impact of online studies and its associated factors on academic performance among Ordinary Level school students (Academic year 2020/21) in Jaffna MOH

Thivisha S¹, Rifadha F¹, Andreshiya F¹, Shivamainthaan K¹, Tharshikan S¹, Rajeev G²

¹*Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

²*Department of Community and Family Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna*

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic and sudden closure of schools and subsequent adoption of online education caused challenges for students' learning. The objective of this study was to determine the impact of online studies and its associated factors on academic performance among ordinary level (O/L) school students (Academic year 2020/21) in Jaffna MOH.

Methods: This school-based analytical cross-sectional study was carried out among 384 O/L students from 17 secondary schools in the Jaffna MOH area who were in Grade 11 in the academic year 2020/21. Stratified sampling was used. Data were collected by self-administered questionnaire. Academic performance was assessed by the marks obtained in six subjects that are common to all. Descriptive statistics and bivariate analysis were performed using SPSS software.

Results: The response rate was 84.5%. More than half of the respondents were females (55.3%). The majority of students (97.8%) had engaged in online studies; 88.6% students were from urban areas and most attended online sessions at home (98.3%). Among those who did not engage in online learning (2.2%), half lacked an appropriate learning environment. Over 65% of the students who engaged in online studies had satisfactory academic performance in the second and third terms. All online learners used video (100%) but power point was perceived as most effective; 86.4% used smartphones and 51.1% used a data package and experienced average network quality; 92.3% used Zoom, the most popular app; 91.8% of students had interactive sessions with the teacher while 61.9% of them used audio-based communication. Statistically significant associations were found between academic performance and sex, comfort with delivery method, device, app used for online learning, student-teacher interaction, conducting assignments, category of hometown (urban/rural), leisure time apps in certain subjects and terms ($p \leq 0.05$).

Conclusion : The study found that the majority of students engaged in online studies and among them 65% had satisfactory academic performance. Based our results, schools that are conducting or planning to conduct online learning session should focus on regular and meaningful student-teacher interaction, attractive power point presentations and Zoom lecture sessions.

Keywords: Online learning, Academic performance, Secondary school students, COVID-19