

Adaptation to online-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and its associated factors among medical students, Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna

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Background and Objective: During the COVID-19 pandemic crisis educational activities were switched from face-to-face learning to digital learning. The objective of this study was to describe adaptation to online-based learning (OBL) during the COVID-19 pandemic and to determine the associated factors among medical students in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna.

Methods: This university-based descriptive cross-sectional study was carried out among 427 medical students in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Jaffna in August 2021 using Google Forms. Stratified and simple random sampling methods were used in two stages. Data were analyzed using SPSS; descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. A t-test was used. Adaptation to OBL was quantified using a composite score.

Results: The response rate was 89.7% (383/427). Participants included second (35.5%), third (30.8%), and fourth (32.6%) year medical students. The majority of the participants were females (65.3%). Preference of mode of teaching included OBL (52.5%), traditional face-to-face learning (30.8%) and not feeling a difference between these two methods (16.7%). Students perceived both an increase (36.8%) and a decrease (36.8%) in their attendance in LMS-based learning, while 39.7% reported an increase and 24.3% a reduction in their attendance during Zoom lectures. Adaptation to OBL was associated with batch ($p < 0.001$), prior use of Zoom ($p < 0.001$), purchase of a new device for OBL ($p < 0.001$), voice clarity in OBL ($p < 0.001$), difficulty in unmuting to talk or removing raised hand ($p < 0.001$), internet coverage issue in the home area ($p = 0.003$), background noise at home ($p = 0.011$), difficulty in finding a new place with a good network connection ($p = 0.046$), difficulty in swapping the type of data connection such as mobile data and Wi-Fi ($p < 0.001$), difficulty in changing the device ($p < 0.001$), obtaining a special data package ($p = 0.006$), financial assistance to get data connection ($p = 0.005$), and facility to get a loan ($p < 0.001$).

Conclusions: The majority preferred OBL and the associated factors are determined in this study. OBL could be improved with consideration to the associated factors.

Keywords: Adaptation, Online, Face-to-face learning, COVID-19, Medical students