Emergency Preparedness: Supporting Continuity of Teaching and Learning in Nursing Education (A Mini Review)

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Abstract: *Natural disasters, human disasters like global pandemic diseases, natural disasters, man-made tragedies, war conflicts, and social crises have disrupted the education of 75 million students globally. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, education has been overwhelmed by 1.53 billion learners out of faculties and 184 country-wide school closures, and also, 87.6% of the world's total enrolled learners are impacted (Education Cannot Wait - ECW, 2020). A lot of institutions have to cancel all face-to-face classes, including labs and other learning experiences, and then move their courses into an online mode to help in preventing the spread of COVID-19 virus. As the result, the research question came out that how emergency preparedness for students to continue their education during this pandemic period. This mini-review paper will discuss emergency preparedness in education to continue student's learning through online learning and how online learning effects on nursing education.*

Keywords: emergency preparedness, nursing education, online learning, emergency remote teaching

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1. Introduction

Emergency remote teaching (ERT) is a temporary shift of an instructional method as an alternate delivery method due to crisis circumstances. It involves the employment of fully remote teaching ways in which face-to-face or as blended or hybrid modes will be delivered that may return to the formal traditional mode for education once the crisis has abated. The main purpose of ERT is not to re-design a strong educational ecosystem but rather to produce temporary access to instructional supports in an exceedingly manner that is quick to line up and is reliably available during an emergency or crisis (Hodges et.al, 2020).

2. Role of online learning in Emergency Remote Teaching (ERT)

During a crisis, while the essential needs for a human being like health, clean water supply, and sanitation are being responded to, educational needs also cannot be forgotten and these have an equally detrimental impact like other essential needs. The emergency responses within the education system, a holistic spectrum of needs of the students, their parents, educators, and institutions that are facing a crisis should be considered. Because of the threat of COVID-19 pandemics, all educational institutions including, universities face difficulties on how to continue teaching and learning while keeping their faculty, staff, and students safe from this public health emergency. As a result, continuity of learning through alternative

learning pathways must also be a top priority at the moment to ensure the interruption to education is as limited as possible and to continue the education system.

Continuity of learning is that the maintenance of education within the event of a prolonged school closure. It is a critical component for educational faculty in emergency management of the educational system because it promotes the continuation of teaching and learning despite circumstances that interrupt normal student's attendance for one or more students (Hodges et.al. 2020). However, many considerations play a role in the development of distance learning programs, such as accessibility of internet, type and quality of teaching materials, and also the length of a distance learning program. Due to a huge impact of COVID-19, the education sectors required to shift to online learning and blended learning modes. Academics have had to adapt to the present change, both in teaching and also the assessment process. This has generated several challenges and opportunities for both academics and students.

The descriptive study on how online or distance learning was included within the institutions' emergency plans as solutions to emergencies conducted by Meyer and Wilson (2011) among 50 public institutions of fifty states which had been affected H1N1 infection. As per study findings, 66% of studied institutions did not include any reference to online learning as a way to continue coursework. 33% of institutions did include suggestions to schools to seek out other ways of delivering courses, using technology or specific tools to try and do so, but only one institution mentioned online learning (Meyer & Wilson, 2011).

Besides, a case study on online education in Peking University's during the outbreak of the COVID-19 done by Wei Bao in 2020 mentioned that the amount, difficulty, and length of teaching contents should match with the educational readiness and online learning behaviour of scholars. Moreover, sufficient support with timely feedback, students' engagement, and contingency plans in advance for addressing possible problems like the traffic overload issue of the internet education platform should be considered in online learning (Bao, 2020).

As the result, regarding the emergency remote teaching, privacy and students' data, accessibility of digital tools for teaching and learning website, and also the digital divide or the gap between students who have access to and use technology in meaningful ways to further their learning and people who do not should take as an enormous concern are needed to be considered (Trust, 2020).

3. Online Learning and Nursing Education

Applying the innovative methods in health care institutions has a positive effect on not only improving education but also empowering people, strengthening governance, and achieving the human development goal for the country (Jayalaxmi, 2016). Innovations rely upon the teacher's ability that how they utilize the educational strategies while delivering lectures or teaching in a clinical setting. Nursing could be a field requiring clinical knowledge and skills to provide care for the patients and their families in their real-life (Kalaivani, 2014). Nursing graduates must be prepared as competent healthcare professionals in an exceedingly highly complex, diverse, and ever-changing health care environment. The learning process in nursing education is exclusive because the nursing students should be able to perform the activities of the profession in lively situations of human beings (Nabors, 2012). Therefore, critical thinking is crucial to providing safe, competent, and skillful nursing practice for providing quality care. During any course of a nursing program, clinical experiences are considered as the lifeblood of nursing education, and nursing educators and faculties have a

responsibility to provide the most efficient clinical instructions to help the nursing students with the finest learning during their course (Sharma, 2017). Nurse educators are obligated to create learning environments that support students' critical thinking. It is not only important what students learn, but also equally vital that how they learn (Nabors, 2012). For these reasons, traditional teaching methods should be transformed to enhance learning experiences and facilitate lifelong learning.

Technological advancement is probably going to provide more opportunities for a non-traditional mode of education. Zolfaghari et al., (2013) presented preliminary outcomes of the blended learning program in educating nursing and midwifery students in Iran, and also the results showed that there was a positive effect on students' learning outcomes and participation. In Chong, Francis, Cooper, Abdullah, Hmwe, and Sohod (2015) study also showed that Malaysian nurses agreed that e-learning was necessary to extend their knowledge and technical skills as well as to improve their attitudes toward competent nursing care and clinical performance.

The integration of e-learning into undergraduate, post-graduate, and continuous nursing education programs is consistent with adult learning theory and presents effective teaching and deeper learning. By incorporating with technology in teaching and learning activities can increase new learning experiences for learners and teaching experiences for lecturers (Khaled, Neel & Louise, 2011).In addition, a quasi-experimental study on the effectiveness of blended learning on nursing student's outcomes regarding new trends in the nursing subject at Ain Shams University mentioned that there was an improvement in student's satisfaction of blended learning group regarding the course and teaching method with a highly statistically significant difference between two groups (Mersal, Fathia Ahmed, and Nahed Ahmed Mersal, 2014).

However, in the study of Li, Tsai, Tao, and Lorentz (2014) mentioned that there have been no significant differences in academic performance before and after the courses that adopted a blended learning approach. Moreover, interview findings from the faculty members proposed that there was some initial resistance among students who were taking the online content outside of class in the same study. Studies in both medial and non-medical literature demonstrated that e-learning could not replace traditional-instructor led training, although e-learning has many advantages like it is simple to access and user-friendly. Therefore, e-learning will be complemented into traditional teaching as a kind of blended learning strategy (Khaled et.al, 2011). As a result, when designing an educational program, it is suggested that integrating e-learning into existing medical, nursing and health-related curriculum should begin with a needs assessment, then should design plan very well and conclude with the choice to use it.

In other aspects, a huge advantage of online nursing education has flexibility in studying. Online classrooms use alternative technology for learning, like interactive videos, written materials, and recorded or real-time lectures to coach students. During this ever-evolving and technology-driven learning environment, students have more options to learn, often through online chats (such as Zoom, google meet) or virtual reality. This includes a more immersive learning experience than a conventional classroom setting. As nurses learn new technology through online nursing education, they will bring that knowledge into the healthcare environment to create communication faster and more efficient in providing care (McKenzie & Murray 2010).

Besides, E-learning gives convenience to those who uses it because it gives access to the education at anytime and anywhere. Furthermore, the nurses can have consistent and continuous learning without having to be physically present in the class. Subsequently, nurses can abreast with advanced knowledge through a cost-effective way as they can save cost on transportation and other logistic expenses. On top of that, e-learning helps the nurses to keep up with the learning at their own pace since they can review and revise the materials whenever they want to. As a result, they will not be left behind in throughout the learning process (Abbaszadeh, A., Abbaszadeh, A., Sabeghi, H., Borhani, F., & Heydari, A. 2011).

4. Conclusion

Overall, this paper highlights ERT with online learning, especially in nursing education. With that, institutions can evaluate their efforts, identify strengths and weaknesses to be better prepared for the future has to implement ERT although the COVID-19 pandemic is stressful. Moreover, higher education institutions will emerge guidelines to evaluate how well they were able to implement ERT to maintain continuity of instruction and student learning. Last, but not least, online learning in nursing education also brings innovative skills for nurses in the future.

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