

Challenges in the Clinical Education Environment during the COVID-19 Outbreak: The Experiences of Medical Students

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Qualitative Study

Abstract

Background: The aim of the present study was to determine the challenges of medical students in the clinical education environment during the outbreak of Covid-19 to understand their experiences.

Methods: This qualitative study was performed based on the hermeneutic phenomenological approach and Van Manen's analytical method from 10th of August to 12th of September 2020 in different departments of Qazvin University of Medical Sciences, Iran. In this phenomenological study, using the purposive sampling method, the participants were selected from among medical students. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 12 medical students. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed, and then, the codes, categories, and themes were extracted using Van Manen's analytical method.

Results: The 5 main themes of the present study were 'inefficient clinical education', 'dealing with real work conflicts', 'the future professional challenges', 'the challenges related to organizational policy', and 'the challenges related to the sense of stigma among the medical staff'. The most important challenges consisted of 'moving away from the educational goals due to reduced attendance at the clinical setting', 'the cancellation of some clinical courses', 'the creation of stress in the students by professors', 'fear of getting sick and transmitting the disease to family members', 'fatigue and heavy sweating due to caring for a large number of patients while wearing isolation gowns', 'the prolongation of the students' studies and delay in starting their thesis'.

Conclusion: The results of this study provided a deeper insight into the perceptions, feelings, and experiences of medical students during the coronavirus pandemic.

Keywords: Education; Medical Students; COVID-19

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