Slack Intern Curriculum Supports Intern Preparedness and Bridges Curriculum Gaps due to COVID-19

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Objectives: Assess the effectiveness of social media implementation of an Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) milestone-based curriculum during the spring 2020 U.S. COVID-19 surge. The hypothesis is that pre-interns will report improvements in PP regarding multiple ACGME milestone topics.

Background: Transitioning to residency involves translation of academic knowledge into clinical acumen, and is complicated by variable medical school experiences. The COVID-19 pandemic presented a new challenge by displacing students from clinical rotations. Virtual educational modalities such as the Slack Intern Curriculum (SIC) have increased newly-matched “pre-intern” perceived preparedness (PP) for residency in prior years, but the SIC had never been implemented or evaluated in a pandemic with disrupted medical education.

Methods: The SIC was constructed using topics from 8 ACGME milestones in emergency medicine (EM), incorporated into 8 clinical scenarios. Residency recruitment occurred via national EM listservs; of 276 programs, 27 enrolled. Curricular implementation was on Slack workspaces. Cases included stimulus images and clinical questions. Ample discussion time, answers, and resources were provided.

Trends in PP were calculated with descriptive statistics and the Wilcoxon Rank Sum test.

Results: Of 311 total pre-interns contacted, 289 (92.9%) completed a presurvey in April/May 2020, and 240 (77.2%) completed a post-survey in June/July 2020, for an 83.9% follow-through rate. Pre-interns reported statistically significant increases in PP both overall and regarding 14 of 21 milestones. See Table 1.

Conclusion: Amidst the educational disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic, pre-interns participating in the SIC reported statistically significant increases in PP. Limitations include absence of control or pre-pandemic data. Future directions include adapting the SIC to other specialties’ ACGME milestones for generalizability across all fields.