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Anatomical models vs non-tactile distanced learning in otolaryngology teaching

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Introduction: Medical schools in the United Kingdom are under increasing pressure to provide more streamlined, applicable teaching due to rising numbers of trainee doctors, but are failing to meet their educational need for otolaryngology. The recent COVID 19 pandemic has placed additional pressures on medical schools to adapt the medium over which the curriculum is delivered. The use of tactile learning with 3- dimensional models and distanced learning via videoconferencing may provide alternative teaching methods to meet otolaryngology undergraduate learning requirements. This pilot study aimed to assess the differences in undergraduate student attitudes towards tactile learning via non-tactile distanced learning and review their acceptability amongst this cohort.

Methods: Two groups of medical students observed a single educational event on the larynx and management of the airway. The learning opportunity was delivered in a lecture format with the lecturer demonstrating on an anatomical model of the larynx. Group one (tactile group) had an identical model to interact with during the lecture and were present within the lecture theatre; group two (non-tactile group) did not and observed the lecture via video link. Students were asked to rank their opinion to several statements about the session based on an 11-point Likert scale and give qualitative feedback.

Results: All ranked feedback was mainly positive. Tactile learning was equivalent to non-tactile learning based on the ranked feedback from the students statistically, except for improvement in anatomical knowledge, which the students thought tactile learning was superior ($p = 0.017$). A variety of qualitative feedback was received by both groups.

Conclusions: This pilot study provides evidence for the acceptability amongst students of the use of non-tactile distanced learning to deliver the otolaryngology undergraduate curriculum compared to tactile learning. This can provide the basis for larger studies to assess the educational impact of these different teaching methods.

Biography

Aashish Pandya completed his MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) at Cardiff Medical School, Cardiff University in United Kingdom.

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