

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

COVID-19 pandemic: An opportunity to promote e-learning in the nursing profession

To the Editor,

Since December 2019, the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a global health problem. Educational institutions around the world have been forced to use online platforms in their educational activities. Electronic learning (e-learning) in educational activities is one of the several features of digitalisation in higher education institutions (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). E-learning involves the use of electronic resources such as the Internet, computers and smartphones to obtain and disseminate information (Olum et al., 2020). Among these, nursing education is a discipline based on practical skills and theoretical knowledge, which use of e-learning after face-to-face training can be effective in the development of practical skills, confidence, self-efficacy, and reduce the anxiety of students. However, the importance of e-learning was overlooked until before the COVID-19 pandemic (Güven Özdemir & Sonmez, 2020). Despite the challenges of using e-learning in many academic institutions, especially in low- and middle-income countries such as lack of infrastructure, insufficient resources for public access, and lack of specialists to implement e-learning platforms, the COVID-19 pandemic has provided opportunities to promote e-learning in the nursing profession (Olum et al., 2020). These opportunities in the nursing profession can be useful for students and faculty members.

These opportunities for students can include increasing problem-solving and critical thinking skills, improving learning in practical and theoretical topics, engaging more with scientific topics and feeling more connected to the learning environment. On the contrary, one of the benefits of e-learning is self-control. Students can save educational content, including videos, slides and audio content, and use it at any other time. Thus, the COVID-19 pandemic provided opportunities to promote e-learning in the nursing profession to students, such as improving their learning and attitudes towards e-learning, preventing their separation from the educational environment, documenting and monitoring education, and increasing perceived usefulness (Hayat et al., 2021).

Also, e-learning can be a valuable opportunity for nursing faculty members to update educational content. Although they initially resisted the use of virtual technologies in their educational activities due to their lack of familiarity with e-learning, over time their participation in the production and presentation of virtual content increased with the improvement of appropriate infrastructure and their skills. Also, engagement in e-learning activities can help to acquire new skills for teaching using new online platforms and increase

their awareness and positive attitude towards this educational approach (Hayat et al., 2021).

Overall, managers and policymakers can have a positive impact on the nursing profession by the implementation of e-learning with the right educational policies. In order to make e-learning more effective, it is recommended that colleges provide the necessary standards and regulations. It is also important to hold workshops related to the use of e-learning to empower faculty and students in virtual education. In addition, improving infrastructure and provision of free Internet packages to students and faculty can promote e-learning in the nursing profession.

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