



Educators' experience during the COVID Pandemic with virtual medical student rounds on an inpatient Family Medicine Service

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Introduction

The pandemic of **COVID-19** has **created many challenges** for academic medicine, including the education of **medical students**, who were **removed from face-to-face clinical rotations**.

To address this challenge, our **Family Medicine (FM)** inpatient team employed innovative educational methods including HIPAA-compliant **iPads and Zoom** sessions to allow students to remotely **resume real patient contact** and participate in virtual rounding with the FM team. Amidst such benefits, this also created difficulties for educators as they adapted to these new methods.

Objective

To **better understand the challenges** faced by educators on an inpatient FM team as they interface with students over a virtual platform.

Methods

Qualitative with open ended survey questions.



Interventions

Specific questions asked what educators **found to be most effective** for conducting virtual rounds, and what clinical content was considered most important for students to take away from the clinical encounter.

Several methods and platforms were piloted to reintroduce medical students to clinical care with live patients. **iPads** (for patient interviews) and **Zoom** sessions were found to be the most efficient for **virtual rounding** with the inpatient FM team.



Results

Twenty students and **six faculty** participated in the virtual Family Medicine rounds.

The faculty found the **virtual rounds** to be an **acceptable** form of clinically "rounding" with the virtual medical students, though most preferred in-person education. This was partly due to technical challenges like delayed or dropped Zoom connections.

Faculty felt that **students participated more** when faculty and resident staff **directly engaged and actively involved** the virtual students during rounds discussions.

Conclusions

Success depended on how engaged the virtual students were in the rounds discussion, and how the team interacted with the students.

While not a replacement for in-person education, **virtual rounds can certainly supplement on-line learning**, and was definitely **preferable to no student interaction**.