

The Impact of COVID - 19 Pandemic on Homoeopathy Education - Challenges and Solutions

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Abstract:-

Background: The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Corona virus disease-19 (COVID-19), as the pandemic disease. Social distancing and face-covering have been adopted to prevent the spread of the disease. The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted every aspect of human life, including education too. **Aim:** This study aims to identify the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Homoeopathy education and provide a possible solution for rising problems.

Methodology: The impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the Homoeopathy education system was assessed by keen observations and discussion with students and teachers of Homoeopathy. With the help of information technology experts, the available technology tools were also critically analysed and reviewed to engage them for the solution of the issues concerned with Homoeopathy education.

Outcomes: The COVID 19 pandemic has disrupted the patient - centric teaching - learning process in Indoor, Outdoor, and emergency wards. Clinical examinations, Homoeopathic Case taking, analysis and evaluation of patient conditions based on Homoeopathic approach like mental generals, miasms (Psora, Syphilis, Sycosis), constitution, temperament, diathesis are highly affected in COVID 19 pandemic. The use of online meeting tools, Google classroom, virtual case presentations, webinar organizing tools, and online examination conducting tools is the greatest help to fight the issues related to Homoeopathy education.

Conclusion: Identification of issues and adoptions of suitable technology, effective handling, and creating the interest of students in technology can help to minimize the negative impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on Homoeopathy education.

Keywords:- COVID 19, Homoeopathy Education, Teaching and Learning, Information Technology, Impact on education.

I. INTRODUCTION

A few cases of pneumonia of unknown etiology were identified in Wuhan City, Hubei province in China, on 31st December 2019. Most of the patients were having symptoms of dry cough, dyspnoea, fever, and bilateral lung infiltrates on imaging. These cases were also linked to Wuhan's Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market, which trades in fish and a variety of live animal species including poultry, bats, marmots, and snakes. The causative agent was identified

from throat swab samples conducted by the Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CCDC) on 7th January 2020 and was subsequently named Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The World Health Organization (WHO) named the disease COVID-19. The World Health Organization declared COVID-19 as a pandemic on 11 March 2020. In India, the first case was reported on 30 January 2020. By 5th February 2021, India had reported 10.8 million cases and 1.5 lacs deaths. The pandemic has significantly affected all the sectors including the education sector worldwide, which affects the socio-economic conditions of the people. This study has been planned to analyse the impact of COVID-19 on Homoeopathy education in India. Homoeopathy education in India has experienced a major disruptive change because of the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown. However, for faculty and students of Homoeopathy, the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has transformed the traditional teaching methods into something that is a turning point in many careers.

II. IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON HOMOEOPATHY EDUCATION

The emergence and high incidence of COVID-19 created major issues in the Homoeopathy education system. During this critical time, maximum efforts are being done to control the COVID-19 pandemic. If social distancing and other measures of controlling the COVID 19 are not followed, Students can be at higher risk to acquire the virus during training and can potentially spread the virus even when asymptomatic. Therefore, Homoeopathy educational institutions were shut down both for the safety of students and communities. The social distancing measures obstruct students and teachers from gathering in learning labs, lecture halls or small-group rooms. Measures adopted to ensure social distancing have led to the shutdown of Homoeopathy colleges and have compelled the situation of working from home for both Homoeopathy teachers and students. Almost all students of Homoeopathy colleges are relocated to their homes, leaving their hostels just before the beginning of lockdown, of local, interstate, and international travel. In short, the COVID 19 pandemic had a huge influence on various aspect of Homoeopathy education like; Classroom teaching-learning, Hospital side practical training like indoor, outdoor patients' examination and bedside discussion, Laboratory work, Internal assessment of students, Final examination, CME, Group discussion, and seminars, and Ongoing research training. Clinical postings as internee trainees have been cancelled or deferred. The assessment and academic progress are also delayed. Homoeopathy students have missed the chance to learn about the practical response in this pandemic.

The great challenge for Homoeopathy teachers in the present time is to encourage and motivate the students to get relieved from the distress of pandemic and reproduce their knowledge and clinical experiences so that students can accustom to the classroom environment. These exposures vary from outdoor and indoor ward postings, where they can have interactive communication with patients and teachers during clinical examinations, case presentation sessions, thus helping in the enhancement of communication and clinical skills. To cope up with this challenge, Homoeopathy teachers can use animated videos, podcasting, virtual reality techniques, and simulation training programs for teaching purposes to facilitate the learning of the students.

Use of online platforms like Websites, Blogs, YouTube, Facebook, etc., and online meeting tools like Google meet, Zoom, Microsoft team, etc., can be helpful to host the clinical skills demonstrating videos and procedural clinical videos for effective communications with students. Homoeopathy students and teachers are facing the great problem of this pandemic event, being not upgraded with the knowledge of recent updates in the field with its practical training. The students are also lacking the practical exposure of presentation skills and case presentation and thus discussion of their subject related problems with the experts. Due to the cancellation of seminars or workshops or CMEs, students have to face some academic issues for not attending some mandatory such programs in prescribed time durations. Educational events like teachers' training programs and workshops for teachers have also declined in the COVID-19 pandemic era which ultimately resulted in less up-gradation of knowledge and skills of teachers and thus students too. The issue somehow can be solved by using technology by both Homoeopathy teachers and students to minimize the adverse impact on the teaching-learning process. The individual can present videos, PowerPoint presentations, and audios with the targeted audience in an effective manner. There are also scopes of discussion between subject experts and the audience during an online webinar. The facilities of live streaming webinar content on various social media can help the students to learn from their comfort zone and time. Students can also present their views and present their ideas with peers of the field with the help of such technology tools to enhance the presentation skills.¹⁴ Therefore, we must consider how Homoeopathy students can develop and demonstrate skills such as knowledge, determination, and collaboration, and best preparations for the careers ahead of them in the face of these recent changes. The younger generations in Homoeopathy colleges are perhaps best equipped to integrate technology and webinars into health care delivery and sharing their knowledge in innovative online settings. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the necessity to limit exposure of healthcare workers, some internees or postgraduate scholars have been kept on reserve. Internees faced problems while preparing for their All India Ayush Post Graduate Entrance Test (AIAPGET) conducted by National Testing Agency (NTA). The completion of internship has also been delayed due to obstacles faced during pandemic, so the chances of getting admission in PG Degree (MD Homoeopathy) is difficult for many internees this year.

Continuous internal evaluation and final examinations are also important to assess the learning level of students. It helps students and teachers both to assess whether their learning and teaching process is in the inappropriate direction or not. The poor performance of students in internal exams can help the students to identify their weak areas of learning and can help to enhance their performance, acquired skills with help of their teachers and seniors. Due to COVID 19 pandemic, the internal and university examination mechanism is also affected, which may have its impact on poor performing students who will not be able to assess their learning level and so their poor performance can harm their professional competency. Online technology tools, which are available with the facility of setting question papers, conduction of online examination, and evaluation of students, can help both the students and teachers to get rid of the problems of evaluation-related issues. Virtual case presentations and video conferencing with audio-visual facilities can help to conduct the practical examination to assess the practical skills of Homoeopathy students.

III. CONCLUSION

COVID 19 pandemic has influenced every sector of society along with the education sector too. The Homoeopathy education system has been affected in several ways. The classroom teaching, practical training in the hospital, knowledge upgrading through seminars, workshops, and CMEs, group discussions, laboratory works, and regular assessment of students and examinations process, etc are heavily affected by the COVID 19 pandemic. The use of suitable technologies like online meeting tools, webinars conducting tools, Google classroom, and examinations conducting tools with the interest of making ourselves familiar with them can help to resolve the issues that arose due to COVID 19 pandemic. The use of technology in teaching and learning may also help to bring advances in traditional teaching-learning methodology in the future.

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