

Determining surgical course limitations for students during COVID-19 pandemic

Determinación de las limitaciones del curso de cirugía para los estudiantes durante la pandemia de COVID-19

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To the Editor,

We congratulate Sánchez-Balderas et al.¹ on their article about the limitations faced by students in the undergraduate general surgery course during the isolation period caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The lag in knowledge of surgical branches has been significant. Some authors argue that surgical knowledge cannot be acquired virtually due to the lack of exposure to procedures within the operating room, while others advocate for greater use of simulation models^{2,3}.

Medical education has evolved during the pandemic, and there is ample evidence of the barriers and challenges faced by students^{1,4,5}. Authors should reinforce the use of literature that enriches the information demonstrated in the theoretical framework. Analyzing previous evidence is essential to understanding the problem statement and recognizing advances in the development of distance surgical education.

In a proper methodological design, it should be clear whether the study will be qualitative, quantitative, or mixed. The type of variables used in the survey should preferably be of the same category. The validity of a survey that seeks to measure a student's perception is just as important as the study methodology; there are numerous tools and scales already

validated in Spanish that measure aspects of learning and could have been conveniently used. Therefore, we question the decision to use a self-designed, quantitative tool that was not validated for this study, which creates a significant risk of bias. This study could have used a mixed-methods approach (qualitative and quantitative) or been entirely qualitative.

Research on medical education in Mexico is essential for developing medical education models, taking into account the needs of students and the limitations they perceive. Dr. Sánchez-Balderas' team makes a valuable contribution to our literature.

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Conflicts of interest

None declared.

Ethical disclosures

Protection of human and animal subjects. The authors declare that no experiments were performed on humans or animals for this study.

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Confidentiality of data. The authors declare that no patient data appear in this article.

Right to privacy and informed consent. The authors declare that no patient data appear in this article.

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