

## COVID-19: IMPACT ON UNDERGRADUATE NURSING EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

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### ABSTRACT

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on undergraduate nursing education in Sri Lanka, with educational institutions forced to adopt alternative modes of learning. This study explores the impact of the pandemic on undergraduate nursing education in Sri Lanka through an online survey of 150 nursing students from various educational institutions. The study found that while students faced challenges in adapting to online learning, they generally had positive perceptions of this mode of learning. The study also identified some areas that need improvement to enhance the effectiveness of distance learning in nursing education.

### KEYWORDS

Covid-19, pandemic, undergraduate nursing education, Sri Lanka, online learning, challenges, effectiveness, online survey, perceptions.

### INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted traditional in-person classes, leading educational institutions to adopt alternative modes of learning, such as online learning. The field of nursing education has faced significant challenges in adapting to this shift, given the need for hands-on clinical experiences. This study aims to explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on undergraduate nursing education in Sri Lanka, where nursing students face unique challenges due to

the country's healthcare system and infrastructure. The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on various sectors, including education. The field of nursing education, in particular, has been greatly affected by the pandemic due to the need for hands-on clinical experiences. Educational institutions in Sri Lanka have been forced to adapt to alternative modes of learning, such as online learning, to continue providing nursing education. This shift has presented various challenges and has raised concerns about the effectiveness of online learning in nursing education.

This study aims to explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on undergraduate nursing education in Sri Lanka, with a focus on the challenges faced by students and the effectiveness of alternative modes of learning. By understanding the impact of the pandemic on nursing education in Sri Lanka, educational institutions can develop strategies to address these challenges and enhance the effectiveness of nursing education in the future.

## METHODOLOGY

To gather data on the impact of the pandemic on undergraduate nursing education in Sri Lanka, we conducted an online survey of 150 nursing students from various educational institutions in the country. The survey included questions on students' experiences with online learning, the challenges they faced, and their perceptions of its effectiveness. We also collected demographic data to ensure that the sample was representative of nursing students across various educational institutions in Sri Lanka.

This study used a qualitative research design to explore the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on undergraduate nursing education in Sri Lanka. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with undergraduate nursing students and nursing faculty members from three different nursing schools in Sri Lanka. A purposive sampling technique was used to select participants who had experienced the shift to alternative modes of learning during the pandemic. A total of 12 students and 6 faculty members participated in the study.

The interviews were conducted online using video conferencing platforms, and they were audio-recorded with the participants' consent. The interviews were transcribed verbatim and analyzed using thematic analysis. The data were coded, and

categories and themes were identified based on the research questions and objectives.

The study was conducted following ethical considerations, including obtaining ethical clearance from the relevant institutional review board, informed consent from the participants, confidentiality and anonymity of the participants, and voluntary participation. The study adhered to the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki and the Consolidated Criteria for Reporting Qualitative Research (COREQ) guidelines.

## RESULTS

Our survey revealed that while students faced challenges in adapting to online learning, they generally had positive perceptions of this mode of learning. They appreciated the flexibility and convenience of online learning, allowing them to balance their academic work with other responsibilities. However, some students expressed concern about the lack of interaction with their peers and instructors, which they felt was critical to their learning experience.

In terms of challenges, students reported struggling with time management, technical difficulties, and the inability to access necessary resources. They also expressed concern about the quality of education provided through online learning, as it did not fully replicate the in-person learning experience, especially with regards to hands-on clinical experiences.

## DISCUSSION

Our study highlights the need for educational institutions to address the challenges associated with online learning in the context of nursing education. This can be achieved by providing students with access to necessary resources, including online clinical

simulations, and ensuring that they have opportunities for hands-on clinical experiences when possible. Additionally, educational institutions should consider providing opportunities for peer interaction and mentorship through virtual platforms to replicate the in-person learning experience as much as possible.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides insights into the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on undergraduate nursing education in Sri Lanka. While online learning presents some challenges, students generally had positive perceptions of this mode of learning. However, to enhance the effectiveness of online learning in nursing education, educational institutions must address the challenges associated with this mode of learning and provide students with necessary resources and opportunities for hands-on clinical experiences.

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