

DISTANCE LEARNING THROUGH THE EYES OF MEDICAL STUDENTS OF THE 6TH COURSE OF BUKOVINIAN STATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

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Summary. Time dictates the use of information technology in medical education. Recent realities have shown that higher education institutions need to make the transition to distance education in a short period of time. The article includes the importance of online learning, describes the possibilities of integrating distance learning for practical classes in higher medical education, the ways to provide educational materials and options for monitoring the implementation of the curriculum.

The article emphasizes that self-education plays a significant role in distance learning, and the role of a teacher becomes a mentor who organizes independent learning of students, develops their professional level and creative potential.

As a demonstration of their own experience of online learning, the results of a survey of Ukrainian-speaking medical students of the 6th year of the specialty «Medical Affairs» on distance learning in the discipline «Children's Infectious Diseases» are presented. The survey involved 72 respondents who studied remotely during March-May 2020.

94.4% of respondents were satisfied with the online format of classes on childhood infectious diseases in the 6th year. A significant proportion of respondents (63.4%) noted an increase in time for independent preparation for classes and information retrieval. Among the factors that make it difficult to study online, almost 34% of respondents noted personal disorganization, almost 27% - indicated the need to combine study and work.

Distance learning can be considered as an alternative way of learning in higher medical school to master the theoretical material, however, as for mastering the practical part of learning to implement the acquisition of all competencies provided by the curriculum, of course, priority remains offline learning.

Key words: medical education, distance learning, medical students, academic discipline

Introduction. The COVID-19 pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus began a year ago, in December 2019, in Wuhan, People's Republic of China. On January 30, 2020,

the Emergency Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a global health emergency [1]. Since then, the overall incidence of Covid-19 has risen sharply. In early March 2020, the first confirmed case was registered in Ukraine, Chernivtsi city. On March 6, quarantine was declared, then a state of emergency and a “red zone” in Chernivtsi, in connection with which, all schools were forced to close for quarantine. The educational process was suspended, but in order to maintain the continuity of medical education at the Higher State Educational Institution of Ukraine “Bukovinian State Medical University”, it was decided to switch to distance e-learning. Starting from March 16, 2020, medical students continued the educational process in a new format for them and for university teachers.

In the developed world, distance learning is a fairly common method of obtaining education. Distance e-learning is defined as the use of computer technology for training, including programs that provide learning both online and offline, or both [2] and aims to effectively build knowledge about individual experience and practice students [3]. There are different types of e-learning, including e-learning, computer learning, virtual and digital classes. There are also modes of e-learning: distance learning and computer interaction. Distance learning provides access to learning for students geographically distant from the teacher, while computer interaction is an interactive technique that presents learning material, observes and evaluates the progress of students [3]. The effectiveness of distance e-learning has been proven in various educational and government studies [4-6]. In particular, data from the Institute for Educational Research in Canada showed that students were more committed to learning using different methods, and e-books and online articles were introduced into the learning process [5, 7].

The COVID-19 pandemic poses a threat to traditional medical education, however, it has demonstrated the potential for recognizing online learning as an effective pedagogical method. Distance learning not only expands opportunities for quality education, but also allows it to diversify the learning process, which arouses students’ interest in discipline and motivation. Many new software tools, such as Zoom, Skype, Hangouts Meet, allow for real-time discussions, debates, and student surveys. Demonstration of the teacher’s screen allows you to perform a number of functions for the reproduction of information, helps to conduct an interactive discussion of the results of laboratory tests, electrocardiograms, X-rays and other additional materials. These features are also used for streaming lectures, where in addition to demonstrations, you can provide comments on the material presented. This allows you to objectively test the assessment of knowledge, skills, abilities and avoids the possible subjectivity of the teacher. Another advantage of distance learning is that they have many services that provide this capability. The simplest version of testing is Google Forms, which allows the teacher for a very limited time to simultaneously test the quality of knowledge in a large number of students, evaluate and discuss the problem [8-9].

The aim of the work was to analyze the attitude to distance learning of medical students.

Materials and methods. At the Department of Pediatrics and Pediatric Infectious Diseases of Bukovinian State Medical University, an online survey was conducted on distance learning of medical students who during March-May 2020 studied the discipline «Pediatric Infectious Diseases». Ukrainian-speaking students of medical faculties №1 and №2, specialty «Medical Affairs» took part in the survey. A total of 72 questionnaires were processed using the Google form. The share of boys was 33.8% (24 students), the share of girls - 67.6% (48 students).

Results and discussion. Almost 95% (94.4%) of respondents were satisfied with the online format of classes on childhood infectious diseases and only 6 students (8.5%) did not satisfy this format of study. In the future, medical students would like to continue distance learning to study only theoretical material, which in their imagination would average 60% (25% to 80%) of the duration of the lesson, but the practical part of the study, clearly only offline. According to students: «Online - the format will not replace inpatient skills (curation, communication with patients, the practical part of training)!». Due to quarantine, 63.4% of respondents noted an increase in time for independent preparation for classes and search for information, but for 36.6% of students forced learning conditions did not affect the preparation for classes in any way. Staying at home contributed to the intensification of self-study for more than half of students (60.6%), and a third of students (35.2%) did not change their attitude to learning in quarantine. The results of this survey correlated with the results obtained in terms of increasing the time to self-preparation during distance learning. Among the factors that currently complicate online learning, almost 34% of respondents noted personal disorganization, almost 27% - indicated the need to combine study and work, 7% - excessive workload, 2.8% - were disappointed in online learning. When students were asked about the deterioration of knowledge due to online learning, 33.8% of respondents said that 59.2% of respondents said that distance learning will not have a negative impact on the quality of knowledge, 1.5% pointed to the deterioration of knowledge in the practical part and another 1.5% were undecided.

Conclusions. Distance learning in the health care system in Ukraine has just begun, and this method of learning has great potential. This form of education at the undergraduate stage of medical education was relevant and indispensable in a pandemic. Teachers and students quickly mobilized, adapted and continued the learning process. Online learning can be considered as an alternative way of learning in higher medical school only to master the theoretical material, however, as for mastering the practical part of learning to implement the acquisition of all competencies provided by the curriculum, certainly, priority remains offline learning.

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