



Enforced format change to medical education webinar during the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic

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To enhance the teacher's educational competency and promote a positive educational culture, Korea University College of Medicine (KUCM) established Faculty Academy of Medical Education (FAME) in 2012. KUCM has conducted regular seminars 6 times per semester, and it reached to 100 sessions by 2019. It is comprised of 1-hour lectures held at the medical campus with live links to the two other teaching hospitals located 1-2-hour driving distance. However, since mid-February 2020, the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak led to the suspension of all face-to-face gatherings in South Korea, including in house conferences and meetings. Despite the suspension of physical gatherings, KUCM made the decision to persevere with FAME and move the seminars wholly online into webinars. The authors of this paper would like to share what we learned from the medical education webinar, which has been forced to go online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The attendance for FAME has not been active, and the main reason for participation was its mandatory once per

year requirement for faculty promotion. The mean number of participants per seminar for the 2018/2019 academic year was a lackluster 72 out of 490 full-time faculty members. Hence, when the authors decided to change the seminar format online, we had a gloomy expectation that the participant will be more decreased. However, the conservative expectations were thoroughly shattered by the login attendance number of 210 faculty members on the first webinar on April 8. It was the highest number since its inception in 2012. Interestingly, a higher level of interaction was observed between participants of the other two teaching hospitals and the medical campus using the chat feature during the Q&A sessions. However, teething technical problems, i.e., disconnection, made us restless during the webinar.

Immediately after the first webinar, an online survey was conducted to get feedback and to correct the technical problems before the second webinar. The survey participants were seventy (33.3% of the seminar participants). Eighty-three percent of the respondents responded as they could attentively engage the seminar

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even though 78.5% of them experience some degree of disconnection. Although 37% of respondents did admit to multi-tasking during the webinar, 56% of them reported that they could still engage well with the webinar. Eighty-seven percent strongly agreed with the webinar format, with only 5% disagreeing. Before the second webinar, all possible ways to fix the technical problems were tried including the increased capacity of the internet network and providing practical tips for faculty members for improving better web connection. At the second webinar on April 21, 190 faculty members attended and also showed higher satisfaction scores: mean scores 4.2 ± 0.7 of the 5-point Likert scales.

Surveys from the first two consecutive webinars showed promising results with many positive comments from participants including webinars providing efficiency on time management by eliminating commuting time and space limitation. As with any new technological endeavor, problems with disconnection, buffering, and unfamiliarity using an online platform were identified. The medical school is tackling these issues by securing a more reliable internet network and providing technology education for faculty members.

The webinar format FAME has been successfully launched and has brought new levels of interest and participation from the faculty members. However, the participants' high level of satisfaction may be due to this anomalous situation with many academic conferences cancelled and social distancing increasing people's communication needs. The lack of time and space constraints and being able to multi-task may have increased the webinar attractiveness. It is uncertain whether the current satisfaction levels will be maintained or if the educational content will translate to its application in the workplace. It is early to gauge the webinar's educational effectiveness, but promising results can be extrapolated from previous studies showing the

educational effectiveness of the webinar platform in professional education of healthcare professionals and medical students [1]. Further studies will be conducted on this new platform forced upon us in these tumultuous times, but with the potential to may deliver positive outcomes in the long run.

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