

Addressing the Viability of Pharmacy Education: Virtual vs. In-Person

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to be advantageous in various aspects such as better time flexibility, accessibility and self-directed learning, but lacked face-to-face interaction and was prone to technical issues.

Conclusion

Practical implications of these results may be used by educators to create a flexible curriculum that combines in-person, hybrid, and virtual courses. In-person courses replicate the interactive workflow and interprofessional communication in a pharmacy setting. Pharmacy schools may also take advantage of technologies such as simulations by offering virtual courses to increase accessibility and build technological skills. Further investigation can be conducted to examine outcomes from specific course subjects held over different platforms. The study population may also be expanded to pharmacy schools outside of California to help guide decisions around curriculum development, resource allocation and general education policies.

Objective

The COVID-19 pandemic shifted pharmacy curriculum from in-person to virtual education. There is currently limited data showing the impact of virtual education and whether it is comparable to in-person education. Our Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved study evaluates whether virtual education should remain a viable option for California pharmacy schools and surveyed students from the classes of 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Methods

The viability of virtual and in-person pharmacy education was assessed using an anonymous Google Forms survey and distributed via email to California pharmacy students from the classes of 2023, 2024 and 2025. The study was conducted from September to December 2022 with 49 participants. The IBM SPSS Statistics, Kruskal-Wallis ANOVA test, was used to compare the median scores of students in three different learning modes: virtual, hybrid and in person.

Results

This survey of pharmacy students in California found no statistically significant difference in GPA between in-person and virtual education. In-person education showed greater engagement, leadership involvement, and learning, but also resulted in higher stress levels. Virtual education was found