

Emerging Trends in Health Professions Education and the Impact of COVID

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Emerging Trends in Health Professions Education

1. Interprofessional education to better prepare health professionals for true collaborative practice.
2. Longitudinal integrated clinical education that is more patient, community and chronic disease oriented.
3. Education in the social determinants of health and in the social and humanistic missions of the health professions.

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Emerging Trends in Health Professions Education

4. Emphasis on the continuum of health professions education for the life-long learning and long-term well-being of health professionals.
5. Competency-based, time-variable health professions education to better fulfill our social contract and produce the most competent practitioners most efficiently.
6. The integration of Artificial Intelligence and new educational and information technologies into the continuum of health professions education and practice.

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Trend Number One: Interprofessional Education

1. Great progress has been made in IPE in the past decade and we have learned elements that lead to success.
2. Though IPE standards are included for accreditation in nearly all health professions, there is still great unevenness in execution.
3. The greatest need going forward is to integrate IPE into the core clinical training of all health professionals.
4. We also need to broaden our definition of IPE to include non-healthcare professions.

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IPE and COVID

1. COVID care exemplified teamwork at its best.
2. COVID taught us that collaborative care models must be part of all emergency preparedness.
3. COVID elevated the importance of all health professionals understanding the roles and responsibilities of their colleagues.

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Trend Number Two: Longitudinal Clinical Education

1. Hospital-based rotational clinical training has been the norm for the past century.
2. The deficiencies of this approach are becoming more apparent in terms of patient population, learning environments, and continuity.
3. Principles of continuity drive the longitudinal integrated training: continuity of care, of curriculum, of supervision, and of site.
4. Longitudinal education enables the other trends in health professions education and supports the needs of training sites.

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Longitudinal Clinical Education and COVID

1. COVID severely disrupted hospital based rotational training.
2. COVID demonstrated that alternate sites and models for clinical education will need to be part of all emergency preparedness.
3. COVID reinforced that the principles of continuity are more important than ever.

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Trend Number Three: Social Determinants of Health

1. 80% of health is derived from factors other than direct medical care.
2. The purpose of health professions education is to improve the health of the public, therefore these “social determinants” must be taught.
3. The humanistic heritage of the health professions must be made equal to and synergistic with the scientific heritage.
4. This also speaks to the importance of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the health professions.

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Social Determinants of Health and COVID

1. COVID shined a spotlight on the differences in outcome based on social factors.
2. COVID led to isolation that reinforced the importance of humanistic care.
3. COVID created an imperative to deal with disparities with a diverse work force.

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Trend Number Four: Continuum of Education

1. We have created artificial barriers in accreditation and supervision among the phases of health professions education leading to inefficiencies and lack of educational consistency.
2. Common language and measurements across the spectrum should emphasize learner-driven education and optimal learning environments.
3. Learner and clinician well being must be a higher priority in a reformed health education system.

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Continuum of Education and COVID

1. COVID highlighted the importance of the learning and working environment shared by all.
2. COVID taught us that learner and clinician well being must become an even higher priority.
3. COVID made us realize flexibility must be part of professional development across the continuum.

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Trend Number Five: Competency-Based, Time-Variable Education

1. Move away from “time in place” as a proxy for competency.
2. Time becomes a resource to better serve the individual needs of learners.
3. Requires a comprehensive curricular, instructional and assessment strategy.
4. Learners and teachers become partners in co-producing learning and advancement.

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Competency-Based, Time-Variable Education and COVID

1. COVID demonstrated that we need something better than case counts and time to measure competency.
2. COVID showed the need to be prepared to incorporate and evaluate new competencies.
3. COVID taught us we will need a more efficient and flexible system going forward to meet societal needs.

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Trend Number Six: Technology and Artificial Intelligence

1. Technology (e.g. on-line learning, simulation, computer models) will play a larger role supplementing in person learning and patient experiences.
2. Health profession students need to be taught the strength and limitations of existing and new technologies and algorithms to avoid bias and error

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Trend Number Six: Technology and Artificial Intelligence

3. Health professionals must learn to harness AI as a tool to improve medical decision making and practice.
4. Technology must free up time for health professionals to perform higher functions – reasoning, communications, compassion, empathy – that cannot be done by technology.

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Technology/Artificial Intelligence and COVID

1. COVID disruption of normal education and clinical activities partially compensated by technology.
2. COVID showed the challenge of absorbing a large amount of information about a new disease.
3. COVID demonstrated that we need better predictive models aided by technology and artificial intelligence.

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Conclusions

1. These trends are interconnected and reinforce one another.
2. COVID has made all of these trends more relevant.
3. To accomplish these trends in their full expression will require substantial organizational and culture change.