JOURNAL OF KARNALI EDUCATION HEALTH RESEARCH

Vol. 1 | No. 1 | Issue 1 | Jan. 2022

EDITORIAL

Pharmacy and Public Health education in Nepal during and beyond COVID-19

Nirmal Sapkota[1], Nirmal Raj Marasine[2*], Sabina Sankhi[3]

COVID-19 poses a great threat to education globally, and pharmacy and public health education in Nepal is not an exception. In an effort to reduce the spread of COVID-19 among young and adult populations, many countries including Nepal had prompted the closure of schools, colleges, universities, and all other educational institutions, which no doubt impacted the educational growth of students.[1] Although COVID-19 have given opportunities for pharmacy and public health students to organize different programs aimed at improving public understanding towards the COVID-19 outbreak but is affecting their learning adversely. Pharmacy and public health is an evolving profession worldwide, which requires corresponding evolution of learning methods. To prevent the spread of this atypical infectious disease through control of mass movement, this approach was crucial, but the unanticipated closure of all pharmacy and public health teaching schools/universities caused disruption of the pharmacy and public health curriculum including seminars, conferences, workshops, and examinations in Nepal.[2] This situation challenged both education sectors round the country to think of and devise the feasible interventions to ensure uninterrupted learning of future students in case of similar crisis in the near future. Lectures, case studies, seminars, and practical sessions are the prime methods of imparting knowledge to pharmacy students. But in deadly condition like COVID-19, face-to-face learning is not possible, which is the only and most effective approach for learning in country like ours. During pandemic, some pharmacy and public health schools employed online classes to address the interruption learning, but not all the schools were well equipped with necessary infrastructure and technological innovations.[3] This is the bitter truth of developing countries like Nepal, where infrastructures, access to teaching resources, and quality of research and education remains as the persistent challenges to the delivery of quality education to the future healthcare professionals. Coming to the Omicron variant, almost all of the educational institutes made provision for online teaching and learning practice. Although theory can be completed through such approach, practical course needs hand-on approach which cannot be addressed online. Additionally, it was also found that students pay less attention during online classes. Their reading habit has been effected seriously. Students are performing poorly and are less likely to interact during online classes. This has led to a disastrous effect to their performance in examination post-pandemic and competency of these future healthcare professionals. Due to this COVID-19 pandemic, clinical internships and graduation of students are effected, as they are forced to stay at their homes in the final part of their studies. After two years of completing courses, students are getting their graduation certificate. We can say this pandemic has become costlier for some students in case of job opportunities to advance their career. It is a great challenge to adapt to the changing nature of educational environment. But, on the other hand, this pandemic has provided opportunity to learn and adapt new methods and technologies in the

[1]Department of Public Health, Karnali Colllege of Health Science, Kathmandu Nepal

[2]Department of Pharmacy, Karnali Colllege of Health Science, Kathmandu Nepal

[3]Department of Pharmacy, Modern Technical College, Lalitpur, Nepal

***Corresponding author:**
Nirmal Raj Marasine;
Email: nirmalmarasine@gmail.com
Tel no; +977-9846199604

academic field. Students are slowly adapting on new way of teaching and learning. Now there are many tools, platforms, students can use as per the need of their education. Major barrier in student's education is now uninterrupted internet, as 100% students doesn't belong to the city area and every academic institutions cannot address it directly. To overcome this problem, most feasible and suitable technology and strategies should be implemented by the institutions that can meet the need of both the students and educators.

References

1. Chen S, Yang J, Yang W, Wang C, Bärnighausen T. COVID-19 control in China during mass population movements at New Year. The Lancet. 2020 Mar 7; 395(10226): 764-6. https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)30421-9

2. UNESCO. School closures caused by coronavirus (COVID-19). 2020. Available at: https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse (accessed: February 13, 2022)

3. Gewin V. Five tips for moving teaching online as COVID-19 takes hold. Nature. 2020 Apr1; 580(7802): 295-6. DOI: 10.1038/d41586-020-00896-7