

# Educational Problems of Dental Schools During Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Outbreak in Iran

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## Dear Editor,

On 20 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that the outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a global concern that poses a high risk for countries with vulnerable health systems, such as Iran. On 26 March 2020, the total numbers of confirmed cases, new cases, and deaths were 27017, 2206, and 2077, respectively, according to the Iranian officials.<sup>(1)</sup> In Iran, virtual education began a few weeks after the suspension of universities. At the time of article submission, virtual education is conducted online through smart mobile applications or by loading curriculum content on official university systems. However, this was difficult for the field of dentistry to achieve because practical courses cover most of the academic semester.

The risk of cross-infection is high in dental settings, and more strict infectious control protocols are required in areas with a high prevalence of COVID-19.<sup>(2)</sup> Conduction of practical dental courses would pose many challenges, including physical contact with patients, limited personal protective equipment, patients' fear and the subsequent reduction in referrals for treatment, as well as the possibility of spreading the disease through dormitories. Theoretical courses are offered virtually in dental schools across Iran; this creates many challenges for students and professors due to lack of proper applications for online classes,

## ABSTRACT

On 20 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) stated that the outbreak of Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a global concern that poses a high risk for countries like Iran with vulnerable health systems. In Iran, virtual education began a few weeks after the suspension of universities. However, this was difficult for the field of dentistry to achieve as practical courses cover most of the academic semester. In this article, we state the problems among dental schools of Iran during the outbreak of COVID-19.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Dental Education, Humans

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uploading educational content, failure to anticipate conditions for thesis defenses and the ban on face-to-face defense, decreased motivation and comprehension of students due to absence from the educational environment, disruption of educational curriculum, difficulty in offering future courses, as well as the uncertainty of foreign students about staying in Iran or returning to their country and unwillingness to pay university tuition fee. To solve the mentioned challenges, video conferencing, which allows students to simultaneously view clinical cases and ask questions, free webinars, the flipped classroom model, online practice questions, and teleconferencing instead of in-person lectures can be used to conduct theoretical classes. Although the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the suspension of universities and scientific centers, the scientific and research path must be continued to prepare students for patient management after the pandemic of COVID-19.

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