

The length of the COVID pandemic has highlighted the need for discipline in virtual meetings

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Sir,

I read with interest the article by Al Samaraee (<https://doi.org/10.12968/hmed.2020.0191>) regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on medical education. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about acceleration in the use of digital technologies, not only for education, but also for meetings between healthcare professionals because of the need to maintain social distancing. Virtual meetings are now widely used for interactions between healthcare professionals. In this upward trajectory of virtual meetings, one area that has been neglected are the skills needed for this move away from face-to-face meetings.

Virtual meetings should have the same focus and weighting as face-to-face ones. Preparation is essential for successful and productive virtual meetings. Attendees need to check access, connectivity and compatibility of the different virtual platforms. There will be also local Trust IT requirements to meet. Before the meeting, it is important to be familiar with the functions of the platform(s) being used. Organisation is important as it has now become very easy to schedule virtual meetings. There is a risk that the increased convenience of access to healthcare professionals through digital means may result in an assumption of increased availability. The average number of meetings undertaken virtually may rise if this assumption is not challenged and could be counter-productive if not managed carefully.

With the length of this pandemic, virtual meetings are likely to fill our working days and require us to have virtual discipline. It is important to have respect for each other's time with good preparation and organisation in this new normal as we embrace virtual meetings.

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