

# UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN HEALTH SCIENCES AT PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC

LA EDUCACIÓN UNIVERSITARIA EN CIENCIAS DE LA SALUD DE LAS UNIVERSIDADES PÚBLICAS DURANTE LA PANDEMIA

*FORMAÇÃO UNIVERSITÁRIA EM CIÊNCIAS DA SAÚDE NAS UNIVERSIDADES PÚBLICAS DURANTE A PANDEMIA*

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March 15, 2020, is considered a milestone in the history of our country as the state of emergency and mandatory confinement policies were enacted due to the COVID-19 pandemic. These measures, already applied in many other countries around the world, have generated consequences that go beyond the labor, health, economic and social spheres, among others (1).

Educational institutions were not immune to the government's provisions, so public and private universities "temporarily" suspended their face-to-face activities; however, given that the confinement measures were not lifted, many of them began the process of adapting to resume classes in a virtual environment (2).

Almost 2 years have passed, and virtuality continues to be the means for university teaching. In the academic field, the pandemic has highlighted the shortcomings in digital skills, mainly in older adult teachers at public universities, who are often reluctant to use ICTs (3).

The complexity of virtual education also involves various external situations that can interfere with academic activity such as infection in the student, caring for dependent family members and increasing the hours of work activities considered essential. In many cases, academic work and/or remote work are carried out by several members of the family simultaneously, having

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few computer devices (PCs, laptops, tablets or cell phones) to carry out these activities. Another limitation has also been the lack of equity in the internet service for both students and teachers, some universities have provided limited lines for their university community; however, this has been insufficient. Bandwidth, fast data consumption and network instability, especially in rural areas, have been a latent obstacle.

Work environments have also been a drawback, because in most cases students had to adapt to shared environments with other family members for other activities outside of academics with noise in their environment that makes it difficult for them to concentrate or pay attention to the activities of their training.

Teaching in health sciences, especially in clinical areas, has been mainly affected since teaching in hospital settings such as visits, rounds, clinical examination and patient interviews and discussions of clinical cases has been displaced by virtual meetings of simulated clinical cases. In general, the presence of the health sciences student in the clinical environment, the contact with the patient, the experiences and interaction with the rest of the health team are not replaced by digital tools. However, we must recognize that the use of simulators or other related tools contribute to improving critical thinking, reasoning

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The updating and consolidation of biomedical information (4). In basic and clinical sciences, some Faculties have implemented the use of software to carry out virtual practices, however, not all students of public universities had access to a computer that could support the installation and management of the software, limiting the student its application.

Another fundamental element in teaching that has been affected has been the teacher-student interaction that in the field of health allowed to dynamically resolve doubts directly about the findings or evolution of patients or how to deal with the questions asked by patients. Given the difficulty of interaction, many of the professors chose to maintain their courses with the traditional model and used synchronous teaching to repeat their lectures through digital media (5).

Finally, considering that most professional careers in health have a duration of 5 years, of which at least 2 years have been provided virtually, it is essential to evaluate the impact of the pandemic on training skills; the standards and verification processes for the accreditation of institutions to virtual education should also be reviewed.

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