



## LETTER TO EDITOR

### ONLINE LEARNING DURING AND AFTER THE PANDEMIC

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Dear editor

I read with great interest the article by Upadhyay et al. on Nepalese university students' attitude toward virtual learning during the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Due to necessity there was a sudden shift to online learning. In most instances there was minimal preparation associated with the shift and faculty and students used free versions of videoconferencing software for sessions. The authors should be congratulated on this timely and interesting study.

Students mainly used their smartphones to access the sessions which was also seen in other low and middle-income countries (LMICs). Carrying out activities requiring precision may be difficult. Smartphones can be used for engaging the audience and for instant messaging and communication. Online learning was mainly used to mainly deliver theoretical information to students and act as a virtual substitute for face-to-face sessions. There is a learning curve for faculty to be effective

online learning facilitators. In India an online education program for nurse educators improved their perceived skills in effectively delivering online teaching using digital tools.<sup>2</sup> At the International Medical University several e-Learning faculty development workshops have been conducted during the last eighteen months. The learning management system, library resources and digital tools were strengthened.

The students' home environment, a quiet place to study, the internet bandwidth and stability, technology failure, visual fatigue are all challenges.<sup>3</sup> Due to sampling limitations the study may not be representative of the Nepalese student population. Studying the perception of students in more remote areas of the country is important. Blended learning has an important role to play in Nepal. Students can learn at their own pace and time and watch sessions repeatedly if required. They can learn from global instructors. Deliberating the future of virtual learning in a country with a challenging terrain creating challenges in physical access to learning resources is vital.

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