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# Training in Urology: Lessons Learnt from the COVID-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** COVID-19 has had profound effects on training within Urology with a significant reduction in operative and clinical experience for trainees. Yet amongst the trials this pandemic has caused vital lessons to have been learned that can improve training for the future.

**Methods:** A literature search was conducted looking into the effects of COVID-19 on training and the novel methods used to counteract the impedance caused during the pandemic. These included virtual learning in human factors and non-technical skills as well as utilizing simulation and reflective practice. Innovative and effective training modalities were identified from published studies and presented to identify key resources in managing the effects of COVID-19 on training.

**Results:** Studies have shown that virtual learning has now come to the fore with positive impacts on Urology training. Virtual learning has potential to both aid learning in a pandemic and in future may be employed to provide high quality teaching from world-renowned experts to large numbers of trainees. This could reduce travel and conference attendance fees, bringing potential to widen access to knowledge and skills in Urology and break down socio-economic barriers. The importance of human factors in surgery has also been highlighted during the pandemic. Operating in Personal Protective Equipment has elucidated the need for efficient and clear communication while wearing hoods and masks that can impede verbal and physical feedback. Never before has non-technical skills in surgery been more important. The Royal Colleges, British Medical Association and the General Medical Council have provided key online resources for managing personal wellbeing and clinical practice during the pandemic. These have been made freely available online and found to be of great value to trainees. Clinicians have found themselves working in new, unfamiliar environments with re-deployment and re-structuring of teams; reflecting on the lessons learned during these experiences is pivotal to enabling personal and team development.

**Conclusion:** Evidence has shown that through virtual learning in simulation, human factors and non-technical skills as well as reflective practice we hope to see training improved and enhanced beyond the pandemic and into the future.

**Keywords:** Urology training, COVID-19, Human factors, Simulation, Reflective practice, Non-technical skills

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