

STUDENTS' CORNER LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Reflections from a final-year MBBS student on Enablers and barriers to online and e-Learning for health professionals in Pakistan

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Dear Editor, I read with interest the recent scoping review by Zahra Saleem Iadhani titled 'Enablers and barriers to online and e-learning for health professionals in Pakistan' published in the Journal of the Pakistan Medical Association (JPMA, Vol. 75, No. 8, 2025). The authors have provided a valuable overview of the current landscape of e-learning in healthcare education and the challenges hindering its optimisation.

As a final-year medical student in Pakistan, I have experienced many of the reported enablers and barriers first-hand.¹ The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital teaching platforms, ensuring continuity of education during lockdowns. However, it also revealed limitations.² Students in rural areas often struggled with unstable internet connections, leading to missed live sessions. Many faculty members, despite their clinical expertise, had limited formal training in online pedagogy, which reduced interactivity and engagement during lectures.

There are, however, notable benefits. Recorded lectures allowed students to revisit complex material, and asynchronous sessions were helpful for those on busy clinical rotations. Access to international webinars and virtual conferences broadened our exposure to medical perspectives beyond national boundaries, which would otherwise be inaccessible.³

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Based on my experience, I recommend that institutions prioritise a hybrid approach to medical education. This should combine the flexibility of online learning with the indispensable value of face-to-face clinical teaching. Investments in mobile-friendly platforms, downloadable lecture materials for offline access, and structured faculty training in digital teaching methods would significantly enhance learning outcomes. Small-group peer-led tutorials conducted via video conferencing could further improve engagement without overburdening faculty members.

The authors' review is timely and relevant. Including more perspectives from current students and junior doctors in future research may bridge the gap between policy recommendations and practical realities. Strengthening e-learning now will help prepare our medical education system for both everyday needs and future disruptions.

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