

## Commentary on Changes in Oral Pathology Teaching Methods During the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Impact on Student Performance

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**Received:** 30-Apr-2024, Manuscript No. DPO-24-133612; **Editor assigned:** 02-May-2024, Pre QC No. DPO-24-133612 (PQ); **Reviewed:** 11-May-2024, QC No. DPO-24-133612; **Revised:** 23-May-2024, Manuscript No. DPO-24-133612 (R); **Published:** 30-May-2024, DOI: 10.4172/2476-2024.9.2.231

**Citation:** Cui J (2024) Commentary on Changes in Oral Pathology Teaching Methods During the Covid-19 Pandemic and the Impact on Student Performance. *Diagnos Pathol Open* 9:231.

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### About the study

The outbreak of the new coronavirus epidemic in early 2020 affected the lives of people from all walks of life and lasted about three years. In this research, we selected one aspect of dental education and discussed the impact of the new coronavirus epidemic on the teaching methods and student performance in the 2nd year oral pathology courses at Osaka Dental University.

At the time of 2019, all teaching will be face-to-face, and teaching in practical classes will be based primarily on microscopic observation of specimens and oral examination. Review for exams relies on notes and textbooks. In April 2020, confirmed cases of new coronavirus surged in the country of Japan. In addition to a series of measures taken by the government, our university has also adopted a response program. For example, stopping club activities, online lectures etc. As described in the article, for the oral pathology course, to avoid too close contact, the microscope practice was cancelled and replaced by video animation. For the 2020 practical class, a Google form was also used to allow students to ask themselves questions about the internship, which were later answered by the instructor. As seen through the results (performance), performance on the mini-test for post-course pathology histologic image recognition was higher in 2019 than in 2020, while the intermediate, practical and unit exams were better in 2020 than in 2019, and the unit recognition average scores were also higher in 2020 than in 2019. The light microscope practicum helped students' visualization and memorization, as illustrated by the results of the mini test.

The results of the intermediate exams, practical exams and unit exams show that online lectures are more conducive to revision after the class as the content can be viewed over and over again. The virtual microscope, which has been gradually popularized in recent years, can

be connected to a computer to present a clearer picture. Intelligent teaching systems are also more likely to stimulate students' interest. Does this mean that the light microscope is not important? As mentioned in the article, prolonged use of microscope will cause visual fatigue, and specimens can only be viewed in the classroom, but the current hospital pathology diagnosis is still dependent on the microscope, is an indispensable tool for related work, so it cannot be completely replaced.

The long train commute is also a factor. Most Japanese universities do not have student apartments. According to a survey, 80% of students in Japan have a one-way commute of 30 minutes or more. This means that students taking online classes have more time for independent study and reviewing before exams. In the face of the sudden epidemic, all industries faced great challenges. As the global epidemic improves, teaching methods that can improve student performance and adapt to the current format should continue to be explored.

In fact, the presence or absence of the new coronavirus epidemic as a variable in this study also had to consider the subjective factors of the students themselves. Although the subjects are students in the same grade level, the grade level composition is different, and the independent study skills, their interest in the subjects, and their family situation of the students in the two grades affect their performance. These were dependent on the questionnaire and are one of the directions for future research. Educational research is a long-term work, policy-related objective factors and students' own subjective factors should be considered in order to have a more comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the current teaching methods, and better improve the quality of teaching.