

“COVID-19: The final nail in coffin for physical examination” Evaluation of the effects of COVID-19 pandemic on physical examination habits of residents in a university hospital: a cross-sectional survey

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Abstract

Aims: It is evident that COVID-19 pandemic have affected the medical practice and training of residents. In this study, we evaluated the Physical Examination (PE) habits of residents working in a university hospital and how their PE practices did change during the pandemic. **Methods:** This single-center, non-interventional, cross-sectional descriptive study was conducted in a university hospital using an online survey questionnaire from 5 to 20 October 2020. **Results:** 308 residents participated in the study of whom 172 of them (55.8%) were female and the median age was 27 (IQR:3). Among all, 263 participants (85.4%) declared that they have worked in the areas where suspected/confirmed COVID-19 patients were being served. A total of 262 (85%) residents stated that PE habits have changed generally during the pandemic. There was a significant difference between those residents who have worked in the COVID-19 areas (n=230,87.5%) and those who have not (n=32, 71.1%) (p=0.004). PE habits of Internal Medicine Residents were more changed than others (p<0.001). The main reason for the change in PE habits in general (77.9%) and during the examination of suspected/confirmed COVID-19 patients (89.7%) were “self-protection”. Reliance on laboratory and radiologic investigations during practice and not having a thought that less PE will disrupt the diagnosis and course of COVID-19 were also independent risk factors for performing less PE in suspected/confirmed COVID-19 patients. **Discussion:** This study clearly demonstrated that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a serious impact on the PE habits of the residents while examining patients in general and with COVID-19.

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