

## **Editorial**

### **Webinars – A Boon in Corona Pandemic**

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A Webinar is a combination of words – Web and Seminar. Basically, it is an online presentation of research findings and sharing experiences in a seminar, workshop or a conference which uses video conferencing software to connect individuals with viewers across the world (Webopedia, 2020). Unlike webcasts there is no physical audience over here (gotomeeting.com, 2020). The key feature is interactivity between the presenter(s) and the audience.

Human civilization has experienced several pandemics in the past when the availability of technological tools was limited. However, in the era of COVID-19 pandemic, Webinars are highly popular because of the convenience for both the presenters and participants. The speakers do not have to travel across cities or countries. The attendees sitting comfortably in their homes need only an internet access which is easily available now-a-days on all computers and mobile phones. Moreover, you do not need any special technical knowledge to participate in a webinar. This saves a lot of time and energy for everyone besides being extraordinarily cost effective.

“An idle mind is the devil’s workshop” goes the English proverb. In the present day context of Corona Pandemic, when most of the world is under lockdown, Webinars have come as a huge boon to us. We can utilize this time in improving our knowledge by discussing with our colleagues both nationally and internationally through webinars. The interactive real time discussion between ophthalmologists of different countries benefits ophthalmologists across all strata – from junior residents to senior professors besides private practitioners.

Several scientific meetings, symposia and conferences are organized in all countries every year at a high cost. The use of webinars makes it possible to attend these programs virtually at our convenient time utilizing the comfort of being at home. An example of this development is the International Council of Ophthalmology organizing the World Ophthalmic Congress on June 26-29, 2020 in South Africa (ICOCWOC, 2020).

Webinars play an important role in medical education. Since all the medical hostels are closed and students have travelled to their homes, normal undergraduate medical classes are suspended. In the current scenario of lockdown, webinars are the only solution to continue medical teaching so that students utilize the time fruitfully and do not lose a year because of pandemic. Some webinars are now focussing on postgraduate students also, since Continuing Medical Education (CME) programmes are suspended.



Webinars also play an important role in dissemination of current developments regarding the clinical features, treatment and strategies to control the spread of Covid 19 infection. In fact, it is the best mode as far as speed and reach across the corners of the world is concerned. As each country has its own approach regarding lockdown to contain the pandemic, experts can discuss the benefits and limitations of each method and tailor their approach accordingly. This platform can also be used by experts from different countries to discuss the efficacy and adverse effects of different treatment methods used in their countries.

Webinars also help us share special skills needed in this unique situation, for e.g. doffing and donning of PPE suits, preparing slit lamp breath shield and face shield to protect us from infections, do's and don'ts while examining patients etc.

We should also keep in mind the challenges of hosting a webinar. Firstly, getting a secure video conferencing software is a must to prevent hacking and unnecessary consequences.

Secondly, the speed of the internet may sometimes hamper the webinar (Alscher, 2020). Lastly, we should always encourage the participation of the audience in interactions, in order to make it fruitful.

In conclusion, Webinars provide a highly cost effective model for sharing knowledge across cities, countries and continents for the development of strategies to control the spread of pandemic; development of new treatments to control infection and to continue medical education despite lockdown.

### References

Alscher D (2020). <https://learn.g2.com/what-is-a-webinar>: Accessed online on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2020.

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