

WhatsApp® in Medical Education: Building a new community in a pandemic

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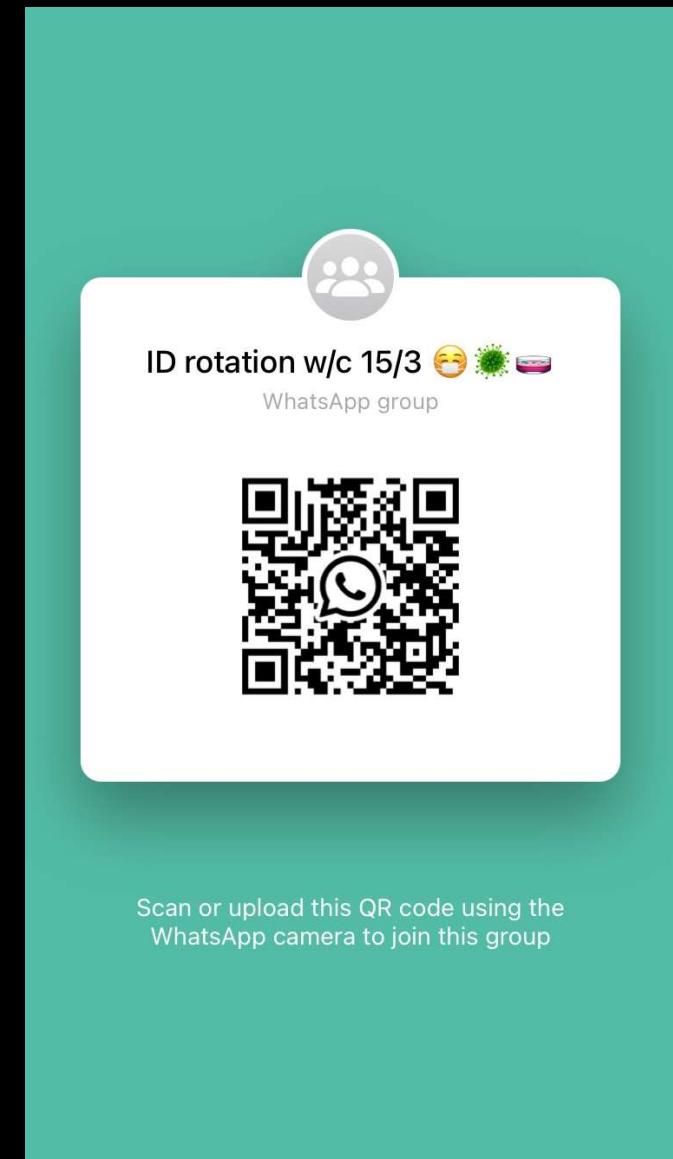


Background and Methods

- The instant messaging service **WhatsApp®** was used to co-ordinate a hybrid 2-week hospital placement for 4th year medical students.
- Purpose of group:
 - ✓ ensure students felt part of a **community of practice** during a challenging and disruptive time for medical education
 - ✓ **communicate logistics** in clinical placements such as last-minute venue changes.
- All Students were emailed a short survey after the placement to ascertain how useful they found the WhatsApp® group.

Logistics

- 4th Year **Medical students** in their first clinical year at UCL
- **Two-week infection rotation**, covering infectious diseases, microbiology and virology, coordinated by a **teaching fellow**
- Groups of **5-10 students**
- Students are invited to join a **WhatsApp®** group via email ahead of their rotation via QR code.

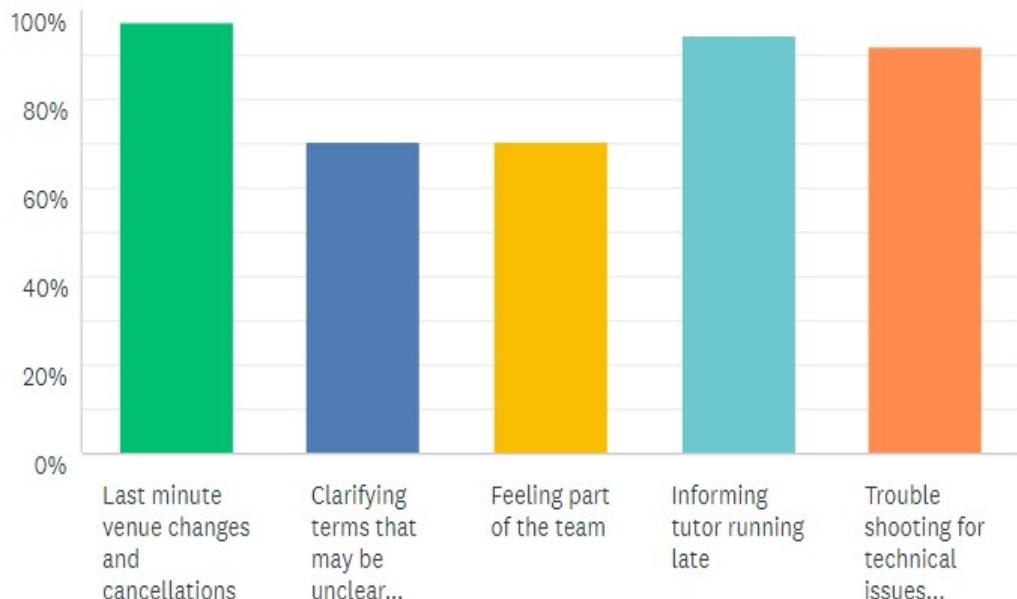


Results: Qualitative feedback

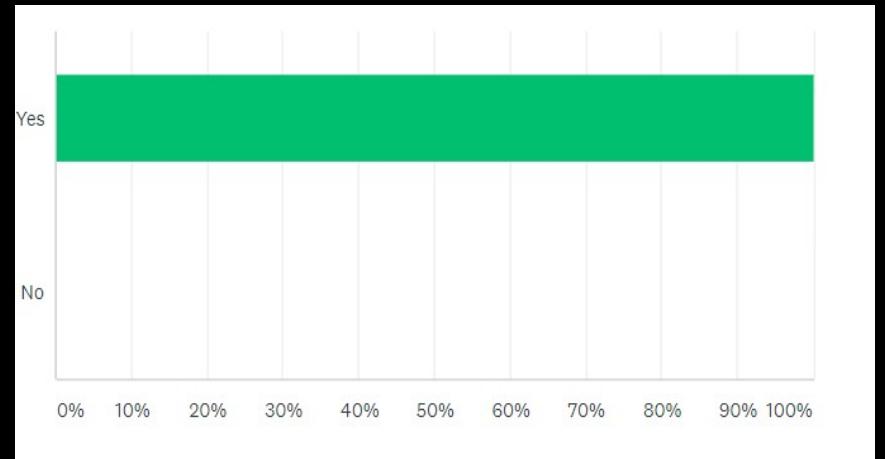
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Results: Quantitative feedback

1) What were the main uses for the group?



2) Should all rotations use WhatsApp® ?



Conference themes

Reflecting for the future; higher education in disruptive times

- **Staff and student experience**
- **Building new communities**
- Developing new identities
- **The brave new university**
- Impact on diverse communities.

Discussion

- **Why WhatsApp®**
 - Students are familiar with this
 - Other virtual platforms are less easy to check instantly on wards (eg. Microsoft Teams)
 - Disadvantages: Messaging at antisocial times, unprofessional having phone out on ward (?), lack of access for some students (?)
- **Socio-cultural learning theory**
 - Described by Lave and Wenger (1991) (1)
 - Students form communities of practice, and learning becomes part of our day to day practice
 - Particularly applicable for ward-based learning
 - WhatsApp® can help students feel part of a learning community by constant access to a teacher (who is part of the community of practice)
- **The use of WhatsApp® in teaching**
 - Described by Coleman and colleagues (2) for teaching purposes as well as logistics co-ordination
 - “WhatsApp is popular and convenient in medical education... Current published literature suggests it may also be effective”

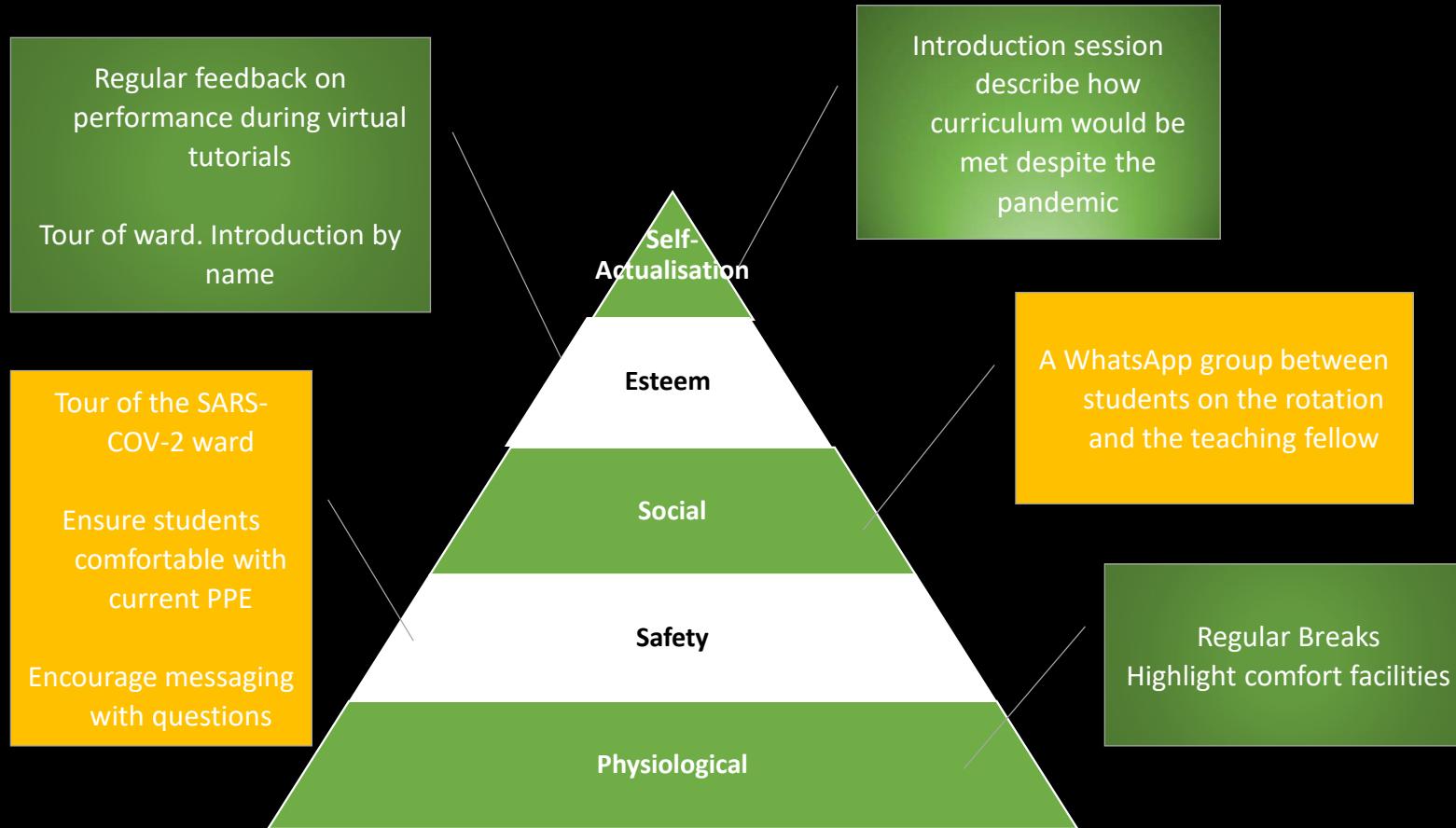
RESEARCH ARTICLE **Open Access**

The role of WhatsApp® in medical education; a scoping review and instructional design model

E. Coleman  and E. O'Connor



Maslow's hierarchy (3): More relevant in a pandemic than ever?



Conclusions

WhatsApp® was used for:

- Logistics of communicating with students in the new hybrid format teaching programme
 - 100% students agreed this was helpful
- Students becoming part of a community of practice
 - 75% students agreed this was helpful

100% medical students felt that all rotations should use WhatsApp®

References

- 1) Lave JW, E. 1991 *Situated learning: Legitimate peripheral participation*. Cambridge university press.
- 2) Coleman, E, O'Connor, E. 2020 *The Role of WhatsApp® in medical education; a scoping review and instructional design model* BMC Medical Education, 19:279
- 3) Maslow A. 1943. *A Theory of Human Motivation*. Radford, VA: Wilder Publications;
- 4) Knowles KA, Olatunji, Bunmi O. 2021, *Anxiety and safety behaviour usage during the COVID-19 pandemic: The prospective role of contamination fear*. Journal of Anxiety Disorders.;77.
- 5) Feroz AS, Ali, N.A, Ali, N.A, Feroz R., Meghani, S. N., Saleem, S. 2020 *Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health and well-being of communities: an exploratory qualitative study protocol*. BMJ Open.;10(12).

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