

# CASE STUDY 18 - SUMMARY

## NAME

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## FACULTY

Health Sciences

## COURSE

PRY6000W - Psychiatry and Mental Health

## LEVEL

Postgraduate

## CATEGORY

Holding pattern/Difficulties

## One sentence summary

Students weren't able to see clinical patients for their ward assessments and portfolio, so they were given paper cases studies to work through and asked to interview people in their lives about the impact of the pandemic as a form of pathology. Some mark allocations were changed. The use of WhatsApp groups as discussion forums helped build a sense of community.



## Context

The course was previously a 4-week block but it was reduced to 3-weeks in ERT, and it moved entirely online. The academic curriculum (9 core topics) remained the same but students couldn't see clinical patients for their ward assessment (30%) and a portfolio (10%), and couldn't present a topic seminar (10%). So, these were replaced with a series of paper cases (30%) that they had to work through and then discuss in MS Teams meetings, and then two social cases (10% each). The pandemic itself was treated as a pathology, and students were asked to do recorded interviews with people in their lives, homes and neighbourhoods about their experience of the pandemic and how it affected them socially, occupationally, financially and psychologically, which they used as material for their two social cases.

could post questions throughout the day up until 3pm, and then I would respond to those questions. WhatsApp was a convenient platform to post articles, videos, etc. YouTube videos applicable to the cases were also posted on a Google Doc. There was a sense of community created through the discussions on WhatsApp. Course content was put up on Vula and that was examined in a written exam which they wrote in-person.



## Outcomes/ Lessons learned

Teaching through the pandemic was like having a national social experiment that students could observe and learn from directly. Students also learned first-hand about the impact of interventions such as the alcohol ban which dramatically reduced hospital casualties. Witnessing the ban was far more powerful than learning about the association of alcohol and trauma, suicide, etc. The students also said they enjoyed the depth of the paper cases and felt that they learned a lot, although that form of assessment also meant a lot of extra marking for the staff.



## Purpose:

The whole curriculum became about setting up a process by which students would remain very conscious about the effect that the pandemic had on people's lives, thus preparing for the future decades when they see patients deeply affected by various outcomes attributable to the pandemic. At post-graduate level, it isn't possible to cover and learn all the information needed, so one of the objectives was for students to learn the skill of forming knowledge cooperatives with other people.



## Recommendation

COVID-19 was an unique learning opportunity for young doctors, with lockdown operating as a "national experiment" that provided educational material incredibly relevant to the field of psychiatry. Switching from assessing real patient cases to paper cases along with social cases (from within their own community) allowed students to keep learning under remote conditions, but nothing can replace authentic engagement with patients.



## Process

Students had to set up WhatsApp groups with me, and each group had a representative. Students