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Virtual Education Products of Medical Universities during the Outbreak of COVID-19: An Opportunity for Promoting Universities at the Web

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Letter to the Editor

The COVID-19 virus (Coronavirus 2019) was identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019 and spread around the world rapidly (1), turning into a serious problem for the public health of people and communities. Given the lack of the discovery of a specific method to prevent and treat the disease, self-care, and self-control by people to prevent the spread of the disease is of paramount importance. A method to control and prevent the prevalence of the disease is staying home, avoiding daily physical interactions, and home quarantine (2). In this regard, universities, especially medical universities, have attempted to prevent the formation of training classes in person and establish virtual training classes. To this end, professors of medical universities have become obligated to hold classes online and offline on the Internet using approved software so that the educational vacuum of students could be filled virtually and the educational activities of universities could continue as planned. Navid Virtual Education System affiliated to Virtual University of Medical Sciences (Navid.vums.ac.ir) has been one of the approved software and systems provided by medical universities to professors and students to carry out virtual education. The platform is exploited by professors to provide their digital educational products to students. These educational products are uploaded on this system in the form of multimedia (video, audio, text, image, and a combination of all of them) by the teachers of each course. It is notable that the products are only available to students and those with a valid username and password.

Given the importance of virtual educational and scientific production content, it can be provided on the website of the university, faculty, or other educational departments so that the university's website ranking could be improved in the Ranking Web of Universities (Webometrics) in addition to making the content accessible to other people for free access to information.

The ranking web of universities includes indexes such as presence, visibility, transparency, and excellence, which show the university presence, university availability, and quality on the web (3). Uploading the produced virtual educational resources (content that is not copied from other resources and databases) on the website of the university can improve its international webometrics rank, especially the indexes of presence and visibility. In addition, promoting webometrics indexes increases the chance of retrieving and observing universities in the virtual world. The success rate of university websites in communicating and showing themselves in cyberspace and in general evaluating the performance of these websites, as well as evaluating and ranking the performance of universities is of utmost importance. Improving the status of websites of universities and institutions based on webometrics indexes leads to more efficient and faster detection of the website

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by search engines and increased website traffic (4, 5). Therefore, given the above-mentioned issues, educational managers of medical universities can make the content available to the public at the web level with the cooperation of professors of courses and by adopting proper policies and measures. By doing so, the webometrics indexes of the university will improve at the global level in addition to making content available on the web.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest.

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