



Introduction

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and introduction of social distancing measures, the weekly Post Graduate Medical Education meeting (PGME) was replaced by 'virtual PGME'. This was delivered via the web-based platform Microsoft Teams (MST) from 29th April 2020. The use of virtual delivery of teaching has been previously implemented in medical education¹.

Methodology

Survey designed using Survey Monkey to evaluate the experience of virtual PGME, from the perspectives of the presenters, facilitators and audience. Respondents were also asked to compare virtual PGME with face to face, using MCQs and open questions for free text responses.

- Survey sent out after 8 weeks of virtual PGME (15 trainee presentations) on 16th June 2020
- 2 email reminders & 1 MST reminder sent

Results

Demographics of Respondents

Gender: Male 43%, Female 57%
Grade: FY 1%, CT 31%, ST 9%, SAS 20%, Consultant 36%, Other 3%
Ethnicity: Asian 44%, White 24%, Black 15%, Mixed/Other 8%
Disability/Disabled: Yes 24%, No 44%, No answer 32%
International vs UK Graduate: IMG 62%, UK 38%

102 responses in total. **55% of presenter responses** were positive towards virtual PGME (29% neutral, 15% negative), and **42%** of responses showed a preference for virtual PGME vs face to face (31% neutral, 27% negative). **Facilitators** responded more positively towards virtual PGME at 65% (22% neutral, 13% negative). They also showed a preference for virtual PGME vs face to face (65% positive, 18% neutral and 17% negative). Finally, the **audience** responded most positively (71%) to virtual PGME (13% neutral, 14% negative), but less positively comparing it with face to face (47% positive, 35% neutral, 19% negative). **81%** of all respondents stated they would like PGME to continue using a hybrid model (face to face presentation shared with others remotely) once social distancing measures are relaxed.

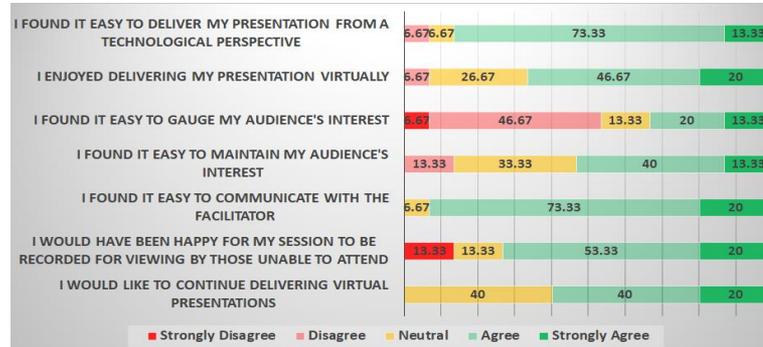


Figure 1. Presenters' views on virtual PGME

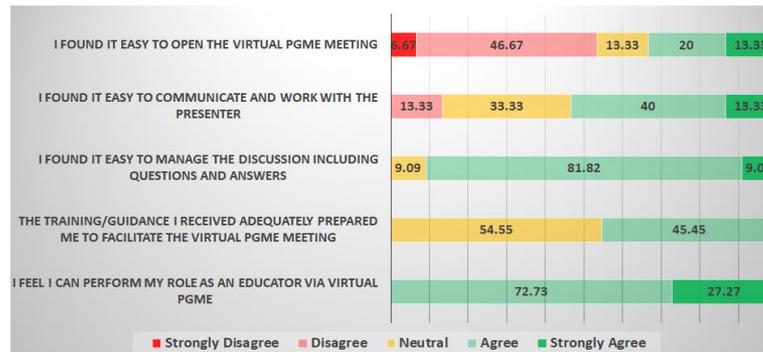


Figure 2. Facilitators' views on virtual PGME

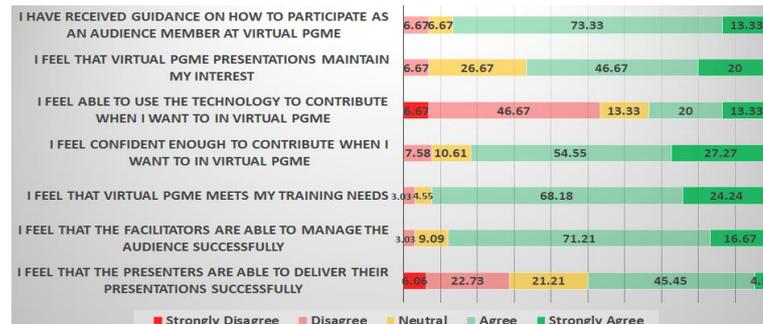


Figure 3. Audience's views on virtual PGME

Thematic Analysis

A thematic analysis of respondents' free text responses was conducted. Common themes identified included engagement, communication, accessibility, success, and health. Frequently mentioned sub-themes included convenience, attendance, discussion, use of technology, communication and the social aspect. Participants largely felt that virtual PGME was more convenient and accessible compared to face to face, but also that it was more difficult to engage and communicate via the virtual platform.

Presenters' Free Text Responses

Themes	Sub-Themes
Engagement	Distractions Audience Presence
Communication	Distractions Visual
Accessibility	Distractions Technology Attendance
Success	Education Enjoyment

Figure 4. Visual representation of presenters' free text responses. Colours showing whether sub-themes were referred to positively, neutrally, or negatively (green, amber and red respectively), and size denoting the frequency with which sub-themes were mentioned.

Conclusion

Most respondents felt that a hybrid model would be best going forward, which would balance the convenience and accessibility of virtual PGME with the social and communication aspects of face to face meetings. It was felt that better training in the use of technology, as well as the use of microphone integrated webcams, projectors with speakers and split-screen would improve the experience. Recording presentations could also be considered to improve accessibility for those unable to attend. Implementing this model would require financial support from the Trust.