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To:
The Secretary
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SUB.: Suggestions regarding the conduction of practical examinations (to be conducted in the near future), academic sessions and future prospects for undergraduate & postgraduate students in the Department of Oral Medicine and Radiology, considering the current Covid-19 situation –

Reg.

Sir,

Following the unprecedented situation created due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the upcoming undergraduate (UG) and postgraduate (PG) examinations in the subject of Oral Medicine and Radiology (OMR), the Indian Academy of Oral Medicine and Radiology (IAOMR), constituted a three member Expert Committee comprising Head of Departments of OMR from different dental colleges in India to seek suggestions for methodology of examinations to be conducted in the near future, conduction of academic sessions, and future prospects for UG and PG students in the Department of OMR. The submitted suggestions were then reviewed by the Executive Committee of IAOMR in the online meeting conducted on 24th April, 2020 and necessary modifications were made.

Based on the suggestions submitted by the Expert Committee & the review meeting of the Executive Committee of IAOMR, and considering the safety of the students & faculty, and the highly contagious nature of Covid-19, the Academy offers the following suggestions w.r.t. the OMR practical examination for the UG and PG students (which normally involves examination of the patient at close proximity, taking intraoral and/or extraoral radiograph(s), and performing other investigations), conduction of academic sessions, and future prospects of students.

I. UG PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

(Presently Applicable Only to Practical Examinations for the Year 2020)

(A). *If practical examination is conducted with the students and Internal examiner physically present in the OMR department of their college with the external examiner onsite (if near-by examiner is appointed) / online (if outside state examiner is appointed):*

1. The appointment of Internal and External examiners can be like it was before Covid-19 situation. External examiner need not be physically present in the department. He / she can be present at their respective native places. Institution should provide high speed internet connection in the OMR department at the institution conducting the exam so that the External examiner (online) can visualize the activity / student(s) / internal examiner, using any video sharing platform.
2. Alternatively, teachers from near-by areas, who do not belong to the college in which the practical examination is being conducted, can be appointed as External examiners (onsite), for the time being.
3. UG practical examination to be conducted in small batches of not more than 25 students per day, without any student-patient examination/interaction.
4. The student / examinee can be provided with clinical pictures / scenarios and they can be made to write detailed inspection of the lesion, provisional diagnosis, differential diagnosis, possible investigations and probable treatment planning for the case.
5. Spotters can be included in the practical examination.



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6. Under Radiology exercise:

- Dry dentate maxilla or dry dentate mandible (or their artificial models) be made available so that the examinee (as per the instructions of the examiners) can demonstrate intraoral radiographic projections (such as placement of image receptor, patient positioning, direction & angulation of central beam, etc.).
- Radiographic interpretation of already exposed radiographs may be written by the examinee.
- Intraoral radiographs with radiographic faults may be given to the examinee and a detailed description of the radiographic fault may be written by the examinee.

7. Viva can be conducted as usual, with the Internal examiner physically present with the examinee and the External examiner being onsite (if near-by examiner is appointed) / online, using any video sharing platform (if outside state examiner is appointed).

8. It is suggested that more weightage be given to the internal assessments conducted during the training period of the student's course and the viva-voce being conducted during the practical examination.

9. During the entire practical examination process on all days, students shall be divided batch wise as before and everyone shall follow Covid-19 guidelines as prescribed by the government, such as sterilization protocol, social distancing, wearing PPEs/masks, sanitization of items used, etc.

II. PG PRACTICAL EXAMINATION

1. Practical Examination for the current session to be postponed by at least 2 months or more, but not postponing the originally scheduled examination by more than 6 months.

2. Unlike the UG examination, it is strongly recommended that PG examination be conducted with patients physically present.

3. The PG examination to be conducted only after the college OPD is at least partially functional in view of the on-going Covid-19 pandemic. This recommendation may be re-viewed by the Academy after 2 months and modifications suggested depending on the then prevailing circumstances.

4. The PG examinations can be postponed to such a date when there are negligible number of Covid-19 cases in the country or in the area where the exam is being planned, or to such a date as per the local government's / university's decision.

5. The examination can be conducted as usual like it was before Covid-19 scenario. Most importantly, all Covid-19 precautions and guidelines as dictated by the authorities need to be employed and followed.

6. The number of patients kept for the long case, short cases and spotters can be reduced. The same clinical material can be used by multiple students / examinees, with utmost care and compassion towards patients, and to not repeat radiographic examination on a patient.

7. External examiners can be appointed from near-by areas who do not belong to the college in which the practical examination is being conducted.

8. Case presentation exercise: Examinee may present any 5 fully treated cases during their PG training (may include maximum of 2 thesis cases).

9. Under Radiology exercise: To reduce the student-patient interaction-

- Dry dentate maxilla or dry dentate mandible (or their artificial models) be made available, so that the examinee (as per the instructions of the examiners) can demonstrate intraoral radiographic projections (such as placement of image receptor, patient positioning, direction & angulation of central beam, etc.). This exercise may also be used to substitute direct patient imaging, if clinical cases for the same are not available.



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b). Similarly, a skull with mandible (or its artificial model) can be used to evaluate the knowledge of extraoral projections.

c). Radiographic interpretation of already exposed radiographs may be written by the examinee. For the PG students these may include intraoral radiographs, extraoral radiographs, CT/CBCT scans, etc. CBCT interpretation may be given extra weightage (DICOM file of CBCT scan to be provided by the department to the examinee).

d). Different types of radiographs/scans with radiographic faults may be given to the examinee and a detailed description of the radiographic fault may be written by the examinee.

e). Radiographic age estimation exercise: One or more radiographic age estimation exercise using panoramic radiographs can be given.

10. Pedagogy exercise may be conducted as usual.

11. Dissertation presentation may be conducted.

12. Viva-voce to be conducted as usual, and more weightage be given to the internal assessments conducted during the training period of the student's course and the viva-voce being conducted during the practical examination.

III. UG TEACHING

1. Theory lectures can be taken online using any video sharing platforms.
2. Clinical training can also be imparted online using any video sharing platforms through demonstrations via videos, showing clinical photographs, etc.
3. Radiographic demonstrations can be made using dry dentate maxilla or dry dentate mandible (or their artificial models) if available.
4. Radiographic interpretation can be taught using old radiographs or images of the same.
5. The clinical quota may be relaxed to a certain extent (20%).

IV. PG TEACHING

1. Similar to UG teaching.
2. Online seminar / journal clubs / case report presentations can be done by PG students 1-2 hours/day.
3. Submission of postgraduate thesis: The date for submission of thesis can be extended to 3 months before the final exam.

V. CAREER AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

1. All MDS students who have successfully completed their final theory examination but whose practical examination is postponed due to Covid-19 pandemic should be eligible to apply for any job or higher course of study and the final decision on their application be made after obtaining the results of practical examination.

Suggestions offered for your kind perusal.

Dr. A. Ravi Kiran
President
IAOMR

Dr. Shalu Rai
Hon. General Secretary
IAOMR