

Abstract:

Background: The COVID-19 pandemic necessitated an enforced 8-week induction period (18 May to 12 July 2020) for all new interns in Ireland. These unprecedented circumstances presented a unique opportunity to assess this induction period.

Aim: To assess the impact of a prolonged induction period on the technical abilities of interns embarking on their clinical careers.

Method: We distributed a 12-item questionnaire to new interns at our institution during the COVID-19 pandemic. Section 1 of the questionnaire was designed to assess the rate of self-reported improvement in the successful and independent execution of practical 'intern' tasks. Section 2 of the questionnaire captured the subjective experience of interns during this time in relation to the effectiveness of an 8-week induction period with senior intern support available. Statistical analysis of categorical predictor and ordinal outcome variables was performed using the two-sample Wilcoxon rank-sum (Mann-Whitney) test.

Results: Our results demonstrated a statistically significant improvement in the proficiency at first attempt phlebotomy in week 8 compared with week 1 ($p < 0.0001$). There was a significant improvement in placing first-attempt peripheral IV lines in week 8 compared with week 1 ($p < 0.001$). Regarding the need for senior assistance, we demonstrated a statistically significant reduction in week 8 compared with week 1 ($p = 0.046$). There were 95.56% ($n = 43$) of interns that said they would recommend the induction period for future incoming interns.

Conclusion: The COVID-19 pandemic has inadvertently identified a model of internship induction that benefits interns, their colleagues and their patients through the production of more technically capable interns.

Reference:

Foley A, Donaghy F, Sheridan GA, Stanley C, Byrne AM, Hill ADK, Mullett H. Internship commencement during COVID-19: the impact of an extended induction model. *Ir J Med Sci.* 2021 Feb 8:1-7. doi: 10.1007/s11845-021-02543-0. Epub ahead of print. PMID: 33559048; PMCID: PMC7870124.

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