



This is a repository copy of *Pandemic tales*.

White Rose Research Online URL for this paper:
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/175820/>

Version: Accepted Version

Article:

Deery, C. orcid.org/0000-0001-7526-7736 (2021) *Pandemic tales*. *Dental Update*, 48 (6). p. 501. ISSN 0305-5000

10.12968/denu.2021.48.6.501

This document is the Accepted Manuscript version of a Published Work that appeared in final form in *Dental Update*, copyright © MA Healthcare, after peer review and technical editing by the publisher. To access the final edited and published work see <https://doi.org/10.12968/denu.2021.48.6.501>

Reuse

Items deposited in White Rose Research Online are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved unless indicated otherwise. They may be downloaded and/or printed for private study, or other acts as permitted by national copyright laws. The publisher or other rights holders may allow further reproduction and re-use of the full text version. This is indicated by the licence information on the White Rose Research Online record for the item.

Takedown

If you consider content in White Rose Research Online to be in breach of UK law, please notify us by emailing eprints@whiterose.ac.uk including the URL of the record and the reason for the withdrawal request.



eprints@whiterose.ac.uk
<https://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/>

Pandemic Tales

I was aware of this flu like disease originating in Wuhan, China from the TV news in December 2019. I suspect like many others I did not think it would particularly affect my life and if I had thought about it, I think I probably thought this would be like SARS and similar threats and not be as bad as journalists were suggesting, how wrong I was! COVID-19 entered my work life in early February, many of our fourth year students go on elective to SE Asia and we had to make decisions about whether they could travel or not. All too quickly, it was deciding our returning students must quarantine before seeing patients.

The School prepared to move teaching and assessment on line as lockdown approached. One of the biggest challenges was communication with the students, how to keep them in the picture when you did not know what the future held yourself.

My NHS colleagues were great letting a number of university staff including me “look after the students” as they started to provide emergency care in the Charles Clifford Dental Hospital. Fortunately, I had just replaced my 10-year-old laptop with a new one, which meant I had the technology for working from home.

On-line meetings and recording lectures all became the normal. Although in my head I think, I have the on-camera skills of Emily Maitliss, it turns out I do not.

The much harder challenge was delivering valid, deliverable assessments remote assessments to over 600 undergraduate and postgraduate students across 10 degree programmes. This was revolutionary change was achieved in under three months thanks to the work of so many people.

I liked and continue to like working from home but it was good to return to clinical work towards the end of May. On the first day back the walk into work through very empty streets was eerie. Stranger still was turning up to do a job I have done for years but not being comfortable, as so much was new. I imagine many Dental Update readers had the same experience.

We were the first Department in the University open to face-to-face teaching in August. The preparation to ensure this could be delivered safely was challenging. Students returned and started with clinical skills refresher courses before commencing seeing patients again.

I have focussed on the clinical students but dental schools consist of a much larger community. Over the last year, the School has progressed its masters and PhD students

opening research laboratories again in a staged and safe way. These students have had a particularly tough time. Staff of course have their own research and this has also suffered.

Dental schools have probably been hit hardest of all University Departments and many challenges remain but I am certain there are many things we will do better because of what we have learned over the last year. Finally, I want to take this opportunity to thank all the staff and students of the School of Clinical Dentistry, University of Sheffield, and the Charles Clifford Dental Hospital for their hard work, resilience and can do attitude.

Chris Deery