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MEDIA RELEASE

LIVE-STREAMED WARD ROUNDS A COVID-19 INNOVATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LIVE-streamed ward rounds have been developed by the University of Newcastle as an alternative to face-to-face ward rounds for medical students during the COVID-19 pandemic when clinical access to hospitals has been limited.

The *Medical Journal of Australia* has today published an article cowritten by Professor Craig Pennell, Chair in Obstetrics and Gynaecology and Professor in Maternal Fetal Medicine at the University of Newcastle and John Hunter Hospital, and colleagues.

“Telehealth is now a common field, implemented and researched in most disciplines, especially to provide access to care in rural and remote areas,” wrote Pennell and colleagues.

“Currently, during the pandemic, it is being used in all areas as an infection control measure. Less common is the use of telehealth or videoconferencing the health team and patient encounter for teaching.”

Live-streamed ward rounds have three phases:

1. the student observation phase where “one student is engaged via mobile phone to observe the live stream;
2. the student preparation phase where the student formulates case presentations; and,
3. the student case presentation phase where the student sequentially presents each patient to a group of 3-20 students who are engaged simultaneously via secure videoconferencing software. A clinician educator is present to facilitate nuanced clinical discussion around specific cases as well as core skills required for the transition from medical student to the junior medical officer.

“Live streamed ward rounds have been utilised with great success at John Hunter Hospital,” Pennell and colleagues wrote.

“This teaching strategy can be applied to all areas of medicine and many clinical encounters, including ward rounds and clinical handover rounds in areas of acute medical care to facilitate student learning at a time when many clinical placements have been cancelled.”

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