

Virtual IM Subinternship - COVID19 Reflection

It is difficult to overstate the severity of damage done to humanity by Covid19. But there is a reaction for every action, and sometimes good happens only because of tragedy. The initial transition to being quarantined was a difficult one for me. As a medical student, I automatically assumed it would be my duty to help. I felt guilty for being able to sleep in every day while some of my colleagues and friends were risking their lives to treat Covid patients. However, the administration wisely decided that having medical students in the hospitals would only increase the risk of spreading the virus to more patients while exposing ourselves to potential danger. Now it is finally springtime in Iowa City, and the country is finally beginning to recover from the pandemic. Next week medical students will be back to work in the hospital, and after many months we are seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. For this project I decided to reflect on the good that came from being quarantined.

1. Although no textbook can substitute learning medicine at the bedside, it is still our duty as medical students to stay on track with our medical education. With rotations cancelled and lectures transitioned to online, this is a feat that I think requires a considerable amount of discipline and dedication. It was only because I have been quarantined for many weeks that I was able to attempt mastery at difficult medical concepts every day for several hours at a time, which is a luxury that most sub-interns will probably never know.
2. Keeping up with the news was a dark rabbit hole that I used to go down for hours every day. This took a major toll on my mental health, as the failures of our national leadership to respond adequately to the pandemic and the failures of many hospitals to protect their faculty and staff was deeply disappointing. However, I believe that the pandemic has placed the shortcomings of our current system in the national spotlight, and this will serve as a catalyst for growth in the sectors of public health and telemedicine.
3. During my shifts at the hospital as a Radiology extern, I have been inspired by the level of collegiality amongst healthcare providers right now. People are being brought together on behalf of treating Covid patients. I think that we are getting better at appreciating our ancillary staff members and helping each other in a way that will continue beyond this crisis.
4. Finally, I am grateful for the past weeks I have spent quarantined with my significant other. We recently started talking about getting married soon, and I do not think this would have happened if we had not spent so much time together. He will be leaving for residency next week, and I am extremely thankful for the extra time I have to cook, exercise, and explore new hobbies with him.