

# Online Learning at the time of COVID19 Pandemic

*By: Annabel Joy Yap, Martin Carbonel, Daniel Castillo*

In mid-March 2020, Rheumatology trainees became suddenly home-bound and community quarantined with UST Hospital in lockdown resulting from the unprecedented COVID19 pandemic. We were to go on duty every 1-2 weeks, schedule patients for online consultation, and don complete personal protective equipment as necessary on physical patient encounters.

With acclimation to a home environment on a daily basis, we were occupied with designated tasks. Discussions via Viber group with topics were assigned for the 2 hourly schedule where we contributed articles, excerpts or answers to questions. Some topics were about rheumatic disease affected by COVID19 and others were about cases encountered on physical and online consultation. Being engaged on an almost weekly basis enhanced our scouting abilities for diverse references which were put to good use on our daily online consultation with patients triaged by Ms. Robelle Tanangunan. Written output via SNAPPS (a six step learner centered approach to clinical education) was used, shared with all trainees, with feedback provided by consultants.

Our knowledge was further enhanced by participating at the Virtual Rheumatology Lecture (ViRL) Collaborative webinars pioneered by the American College of Rheumatology (ACR), conducted thrice weekly - with key learnings from each lecture summarized by a fellow. The European League Against Rheumatism (EULAR) went virtual for the annual E-congress.

We held Rheumatology conferences via Zoom weekly with one fellow assigned a topic. Discussions were led by a panel of expert consultants: Dr Lyndon Llamado, Dr. Julie Li-Yu, Dr. Millicent Tan-Ong, Dr. Leonid Zamora, Dr. Tito Torralba, Dr. Evan Vista and Dr. Sandra Navarra.

A lively online debate “Clash of the Rheumies” held 22 May 2020, cast the senior versus junior fellows to take up arguments on the proposition “A combination of a biologic DMARD and methotrexate is more beneficial for psoriatic arthritis than a biologic DMARD alone”.

KaTUHOD Team: CON side

1. Bethlehem Mula – Team Leader

2. Annabel Joy Yap
3. Dominic Dela Cruz
4. Gerald Natanauan

Team 2: PRO side

1. Martin Carbonel – Team Leader
2. Daniel Castillo
3. Elbert Mendez
4. Hanijirl Badiang

Pre-fellow Dr. Christian Terrazola summarized the main concepts. The discussion provided opportunity for a formal discourse and agreements on both sides. Consultants in attendance decided to declare senior fellows as the champions.

Other webinars relevant to COVID19 and Rheumatology were also attended by the fellows-in-training including a lecture on “Cytokine storm” relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic, rendered by Dr. Evan Vista.

Staff meetings headed by Dr. Sandra Navarra, Section Chief of Rheumatology at University of Santo Tomas, were regularly conducted online, culminating in a systematically conducted section meeting last May 30, covering the following agenda:

- UST Rheumatology patient census, January to December 2019
- While on lockdown
  - USTFMS Online classes for third & fourth year medical students
  - Fellowship training
    - Continuing learning ONLINE
  - Patient care
    - ONLINE patient consults
    - Free HCQ deliveries c/o LUISA of RETFI
- Post-lockdown, continuing pandemic
  - Ambulatory care services (ACS, former OPD)
  - Rheumatology Center (RC, formerly JBC)
  - Private clinics
  - HRU clinical trials
  - Fellowship and IM residency training program in Rheumatology



Despite the lockdown, life goes on, our patients continue to need our care, we must never stop learning. In fact, our experience in the past 3 months has taught us to be more flexible and adaptable to any situation, in the midst of any crisis. We sincerely thank our mentors for leading and continuing to walk with us towards the 'light at the end of a dark tunnel', as we all look forward to a 'new and better normal' after this pandemic.