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Letter to the Editor “COVID-19 and Neurosurgical Education in Africa: Making Lemonade from Lemons”

Never in history has the fabric of African neurosurgery been challenged as it is today with the advent of the novel coronavirus identified in 2019 (COVID-19). Even the most robust and resilient neurosurgical educational systems in the continent have been brought to their knees with neurosurgical trainees and young neurosurgeons bearing the brunt. In the face of this new reality, and in order to limit the impact of the current COVID-19 pandemic, multiple programs have implemented physical distancing to reduce in-person interactions. In some cases, residents have been asked to stay home at least until they are instructed otherwise. This unfortunate event presents an innovative opportunity for neurosurgical education in Africa. Herein, we detail the framework of an online neurosurgical education initiative to advance the education of African residents and young neurosurgeons during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Some people speak of the return to pre-COVID “normalcy” after the pandemic, but it is more likely that the post-COVID period will define a new “normalcy”—one in which some things that were considered impossible before will no longer be impossible. Successful organizations adapt promptly in the face of adversity. While the post-COVID period surprised and tested our health systems, post-COVID African neurosurgical education must reinvent itself and transform its potential into achievements. Resilience in this situation lies in recognizing the value of learning from those who walked the path we wish to walk and using technology to our advantage. We cannot let the current crisis stifle our progress, and we should not aim to return to the pre-COVID “normalcy.” When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!

Conflict of interest statement: The authors declare that the article content was composed in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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