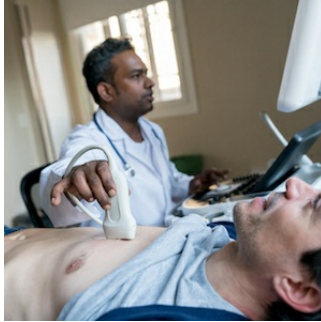## Online Rapid-Response Ultrasound COVID-19 Training

Lung ultrasound, compared to other imaging methods, is a simpler and more convenient way to assess COVID-19 pneumonia. In particular, US scans can be taken at the patient bedside, making it a critical tool for clinicians in deciding treatment plans.

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A free online course, launched by the University of Melbourne, can help health professionals improve their skills in performing lung US scans to diagnose COVID-19 accurately and safely. The COVID-19 Lung Ultrasound course is especially helpful for nursing and paramedical staff, the "frontliners" who bravely face a deluge of infected patients.

"COVID-19 patients can sometimes become critically ill within a matter of hours. The ultrasound is able to identify subtle early changes, and this would allow early interventions to be started," said course director Professor Alistair Royse, who is a cardiothoracic surgeon at the University of Melbourne.

The 30-hour online course includes simulation exercises to enable participants to perform a lung ultrasound properly, including the use of an ultrasound encased in a plastic sheath, for tighter infection control. Participants will also learn the implications of specific ultrasound findings in COVID-19.

As noted by Professor Royse, lung US could be used more frequently and conveniently than some forms of imaging such as CT scanning, which often requires moving patients – even the seriously ill on a ventilator – from one part of a hospital to another. By comparison, a lung US can be done within minutes.

Ultrasound is "superior to a physical examination with stethoscope – which is why we're recommending this training for GPs as well – and it is more sensitive than a plain chest x-ray," the course director pointed out.

The COVID-19 Lung Ultrasound course was developed by the University's Melbourne Medical School Ultrasound Education Group and Mobile Learning Unit. Other COVID courses that cover critical care, rapid response and other aspects will also be released by the unit in the coming days and weeks. Health professionals can sign up via the website: go.unimelb.edu.au/3nkr

Source: University of Melbourne

Image credit: iStock

Published on : Mon, 13 Apr 2020