

## **PODIUM 3.3 - 1:30-1:45 [10-min presentation followed by 5-min Q&A]**

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### **A Critical Discourse Analysis of Face Masks and Its Association with Health Construction in Medical Education**

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**Introduction:** The COVID-19 pandemic has made face mask an intricate object constructed through the uptake of varied and sometimes controversial discourses(1)(2). Medical education research is in part about “making sense” of how discourses of health and illness, living and dying(3) underpin curricular processes and goals. The way medical schools construct and portray face masks is fundamental in shaping trainees’ perception of face masks in the medical field. By examining the discourses surrounding the face masks in the medical school’s public domain communications to trainees, the effect and relations of language expose the intentions and practices in medical education(4)(5). This study aims to investigate how the face mask is being discursively employed in medical education and among the public during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Method:** We use a Foucauldian approach to critical discourse methodology by looking for key phrases and themes related to face masks that can be linked to specific social and educational practices(6). We focus on describing how the discourses of face masks are portrayed by both medical schools and in the broader public media. We will compare the perceptions of face masks across different texts to see how their uptake is rationalized and what practices/processes this uptake makes possible or impossible.

**Conclusion:** Key themes related to face masks emerged from our preliminary research, including protection for self and others, moral conflicts in scarcity and profit, and the implication on anonymity and freedom. We aim to provide insights on values in medical education and offer suggestions for discursive responses in upcoming pandemic waves.

#### **References**

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