

COVID-19 Impact statement

The COVID-19 restrictions presented unprecedented challenges during the final year of laboratory research work for my PhD. Due to the inability to carry out planned laboratory research work between March – August 2020, a major experiment involving the impact of $1,25(\text{OH})_2\text{D}_3$ on calcium flux in iron-deficient Caco-2 cells was not carried out. This was because the commercially available $1,25(\text{OH})_2\text{D}_3$ that was purchased before the lockdown lost its potency over time, and after the COVID-19 restrictions were lifted, its potency was unacceptable to conduct the uptake experiments. Due to the limited funding available for this work, it was not possible to purchase another batch of $1,25(\text{OH})_2\text{D}_3$. Additionally for some experiments where data were not included due to experimental challenges (i.e., in animal experiments where the n number was less than 6), animal availability and suitable supervision for these experiments to increase the n numbers was impacted by covid.