



Some students can now observe surgeries in virtual reality | Photo source [Richard Catabay on Unsplash](#)

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UNIVERSITY LIVE STREAMS SURGERIES IN VR FOR IMMERSIVE DISTANCE LEARNING

● EDUCATION

Students get an unobstructed view of procedures while minimising infection risks

Spotted: While nothing can replace the hands-on experience of operating theatre training, Tokyo Women's Medical University (TWMU) is providing the next best thing. Students can now observe surgeries in virtual reality. The overhead camera provides improved observation angles for students and reduces interruptions for the surgeon. Prior to the COVID-19 crisis, students peered over surgeons' shoulders. Now, having to increase the physical distance between people means that such close contact must be reduced.

The University hosts the Smart Cyber Operating Theater (SCOT) project, a near-future surgical treatment room working on and with experimental equipment and technologies. One of the latest additions to the theatre is an Insta360 Titan camera that live streams and records operations from the surgeon's perspective. Currently, two students can virtually observe a procedure in real-time, and the university plans to increase that number.

Recordings of each treatment are creating a huge new resource, shareable locally as well as internationally. The university is already planning to use the material at medical conferences and future classes. If social distancing remains a long-term requirement, education will be greatly changed. VR may be one of the best ways to connect people, in learning environments and elsewhere.

Other ways Springwise has spotted VR being used to help keep people safe include the [Japanese onsen bath experience](#). And as many people continue to opt for daily routines that are relatively

distanced from others, Shanghai residents are now able to hail [self-driving taxis](#).

12th June 2020

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Takeaway:

As disruptive as the abrupt move to living life online has been for much of the world, there may be longer-term benefits. Increased connectivity and creative applications of technology could help reduce the high cost of many educational opportunities, thus increasing accessibility. Local businesses, too, could benefit from new digital footprints linked to more purposeful community economies. And societies may become even stronger when online relationships are able to grow to include in-real-life connection as well.