



Transforming the Healthcare Simulation Spectrum: Now, Next and Beyond

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Simulated Patients' Experience of Adopting Telesimulation for History Taking During a Pandemic

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Adopting Telesimulation

Duke NUS Medical School has a long history of engaging simulated patients (SPs) in the development of clinical and behavioural skills. Our students engage with SPs from their first year, as they learn the fundamental skills of clinical practice (FOCP), the skill of history taking being one of the cornerstones of the programme. The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically impacted the delivery of on-campus education, requiring medical educators to adapt teaching methods to reflect governmental and institutional restrictions. With staff, students and SPs in numerous off-site locations (their own homes), we developed an innovative way of continuing the development of foundational skills in the online space. Whilst we have heard about the experience of educators and students with this adaptation, the experience of SPs is lacking.

Training the SPs

Telesimulation as "a process by which telecommunication and simulation resources are utilised to provide education, training, and/or assessment to learners at an off-site location" (1). To effectively engage our simulation resources, i.e. our SPs, it was essential that we provide an orientation programme that would educate them on the use of telesimulation. Through an online training session the SPs were introduced to the rationale behind the adoption of telesimulation and the functionality of the virtual platform. Topics such as how to use the video and audio effectively to build rapport during the interaction as well as functions such as moving between breakout rooms were covered. A telesimulation orientation manual provided, summarising the online training session, with step by step instructions and screenshot examples on how to use the platform.



The Simulated Patient Experience

45 SPs participated in a series of tele-simulated history taking encounters for the class of 82 students. As part of our quality improvement processes all SPs were invited to give feedback on their experience. 100% of SPs responded to the electronic questionnaire. Using a 5-point Likert scale SPs indicated their agreement on statements as seen in Table 1.

On whether they could see the medical student as well as they would in a face-to-face interaction, responses were mixed, with SPs acknowledging that the limitations of the telesimulation experience is the non-verbal communication component of the interaction.

"Sometimes, the lighting is not good enough to see the expression on the student's face", and "I was not able to observe students' body posture via zoom as such, I was unable to comment fully on students' non-verbal communication skills"

Table 1. SP rating of the telesimulation experience

Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The ZOOM system was simple to use	71%	27%	2%		
The handout on "How to use ZOOM" helped me to learn to use the system	47%	40%	11%		2%
The briefing video on "How to use ZOOM" helped me to learn to use the system	39%	50%	9%		2%
The ZOOM system is simple and easy to understand	69%	27%	4%		
I could easily talk to the medical student using the ZOOM system	50%	40%		4%	
I could hear the medical student clearly using the ZOOM system	53%	38%	2%	7%	
I felt I was able to express myself effectively	30%	53%	7%	4%	
Using the ZOOM system, I could see the medical student as well as if we met in person	16%	36%	20%	28%	
I did not experience any audio or visual difficulties during the session	13%	36%	30%	11%	
I felt comfortable communicating with the medical student using the ZOOM system	50%	31%	13%	2%	

Telesimulation into the future

As the restrictions around face-to-face teaching due to COVID-19 continues to impact how health professional educators engage SPs in teaching and assessing, this paper demonstrates how to safely and effectively engage the SP workforce during a pandemic. By describing the experience of SPs in adopting telesimulation to teach history taking, we hope that fellow educators across the region can continue to engage SPs in their curriculum.

References

1. McCoy, C. E., Sayegh, J., Alrabah, R., & Yarris, L. M. (2017). Telesimulation: An innovative tool for health professions education. *Academic Emergency Medicine Education and Training*, 1(2), 132-136.