Utilization of SP Hybrid Simulation in a Physician Assistant Program

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Introduction

Instruction during the didactic year of Physician Assistant (PA) education often is more heavily weighted toward traditional classroom and laboratory training. In order to help prepare PA students for success in the clinical portion of their education, an SP hybrid team activity was developed. The hybrid session aimed to provide an authentic arena in which PA students could practice collaborative communication and initial medical management of an acute cardiovascular complaint.

Method

Near the end of their first curricular year, thirty-nine PA students took the Clinical Medicine course. Developed as a portion of the cardiovascular lecture unit, coursework included three acute cardiovascular diagnoses for study in advance of their symptomatology based on the medications administered which afforded the students an opportunity to react to changes in the patient’s condition. Oral medications consisted of edible pill-shaped candies in labeled bottles. Intravenous medications consisted of morphine sulfate which was administered through the hybrid arm. During the exercise, a PA faculty member was present to score the medical management portion. The SP filled the integral role of scoring the students’ teamwork objectives and interpersonal skills. Immediately following the encounter, a debriefing session was held with the PA faculty member, SP, and student team. This allowed for instructional feedback and provided a unique opportunity to the didactic year curriculum was also assessed.

The hybridization of this activity provided for a successful portrayal of an acute cardiovascular condition that resulted in realism, not theatrics. Students’ perceived confidence in managing acute cardiovascular conditions increased through the use of the hybrid activity.

Results

As a method of course evaluation and curricular development, three self-evaluations were completed by students for this activity. The evaluations were administered after classroom lecture, following group study and collaboration on the assigned topics, and at the conclusion of the SP hybrid activity. Using a Likert scale rating, students were asked to rank their perception of confidence in managing the assigned acute cardiovascular complaints. After classroom instruction, the students’ perceived confidence was rated with a mean value of 3.48 out of 5. The mean confidence ranking increased to 3.95 after group collaboration and to 4.4 out of 5 after hybrid simulation.

Conclusions

The faculty’s involvement in this innovative experience resulted in a planned increase in utilization of SPs by this program in the future. It also showcased the variety of ways in which the inclusion of SPs can enrich the Physician Assistant Studies curriculum.

References


