Challenging Clinical Scenarios

**Summary of Results**

- **Background** In recent years there has been an increasing recognition of the importance of non-technical skills training in medical education. Strong communication and interpersonal skills are crucial to good clinical practice. These are of particular relevance when communicating with team members, parents, and patients in challenging situations. We identified a lack of postgraduate training opportunities for paediatric trainees to develop these skills. Our aim was to devise an interdisciplinary training opportunity which would enable senior paediatric trainees to develop their communication skills by undertaking simulated scenarios based on challenging clinical situations.

- **Summary of Education Programme** Level 3 trainees in our deanery were invited to attend the ACTup course. We recruited a diverse faculty consisting of paediatricians, paediatric nurses, social workers, and psychologists. In a unique collaboration, we worked closely with drama students from our local university. The drama students acted in the role of parents for the simulations. The scenarios focused on challenging clinical encounters which may be seen in paediatric practice. These included safeguarding cases, sudden unexpected death of an infant and discussions around withdrawal of care. Feedback was collected through questionnaires and focus groups conducted by the psychology team.

- **Summary of Results** Feedback on the course was excellent. All participants found input from a diverse faculty particularly beneficial. Themes identified on analysis of the focus groups included the importance of the drama students in enhancing the fidelity of the simulations, the necessity of further non-technical training in paediatric training and the benefits of debrief following challenging clinical encounters.

- **Conclusions/Discussions** This course provided an opportunity for senior paediatric trainees to develop their communication skills in challenging situations. Initial feedback was excellent. We strive to establish this course as a regular training opportunity for paediatric trainees in our deanery. The course has also been adopted as an essential component of the undergraduate drama module entitled ‘Drama, Health and Social Care’ now offered in our local university.

**References**


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**Abstracts**

**ACTUP – An Interdisciplinary Approach to Preparing Senior Paediatric Trainees for Challenging Clinical Scenarios**

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**Introduction** Left-Right (LR) decisions are made on a daily basis. For some LR decisions are made with ease, while others with great difficulty. In healthcare, LR errors can be catastrophic such as wrong-sided surgery.

To reduce LR errors, a number of ‘systems’ have been developed such as the WHO surgical check list. However, the question remains, are there more effective human factor based methods to prevent them, for example, could a person-centred teaching system improve accuracy in LR discrimination?

The Applied Behavior Analysis based training method, Precision Teaching (PT), has been developed to teach skills to high levels of fluency and been used in medical education. Precision teaching uses bespoke flashcards, called ‘Say All Fast, Minute Each Day, Shuffle’ (SAFMEDS), in brief-burst training sessions (1-minute timings) focused on speed and accuracy i.e. fluency.

This study reports on the impact of SAFMEDS on medical students’ LR discrimination ability.

**Methods** 80 LR SAFMEDS Flashcards were developed consisting of a LR photo, a question, and the answer on reverse.

Year 4 medical students were recruited. A psychometric test, the ‘Bergen Left Right Discrimination Test’ (BLRDT), was used to measure baseline and outcome LR ability of the control and intervention groups. The intervention group aimed to use LR SAFMEDS flashcards supervised 10 times over 5 days.

**Results** 76 and 67 participants completed the study in the intervention and control groups respectively. Statistical analysis used a between-groups Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The baseline and outcome BLRDT scores were not statistically significant between the control and intervention (p-value = 0.363).

**Discussion and Conclusion** There are several factors which help explain the results: increased familiarity with the test - practice effect, participants not sufficiently challenged to differentiate scores - (ceiling effect), and the intervention may not have been performed long or frequent enough.

Although overall there was not a statistical difference, sub-analysis revealed in more difficult LR decisions training improved individuals LR ability with the greatest improvement in individuals who had a perceived poor LR discrimination ability. This would suggest LR SAFMEDS flashcard training may have impact in complex LR decisions with the greatest impact in individuals with poor LR discrimination ability.

Further research would be advised especially in individuals with poorer LR discrimination ability.

**References**