

Pager Simulation

AUTHORS & INSTITUTION

 **Laura Giovanazzi**
 NHS Western Isles

Implementation of Pager sim for medical students

ABSTRACT

Incorporating pagers into simulation training for medical students enhanced realism and replicated authentic communication. Real-time pager interruptions required learners to triage information, prioritize tasks, and respond effectively. This approach highlighted key challenges in clinical communication and workflow management.

During the transition from medical school to internship, trainees experience high levels of stress related to pages on the inpatient wards (Schwind et al, 2011)

INTRODUCTION

Clinical environments rely heavily on pagers and new doctors often struggle with prioritization, interruptions, and closed-loop communication. We felt that traditional simulations may not adequately reproduce these communication demands and by using pagers it increases realism and cognitive load in a controlled setting.

METHODOLOGY

A simulation was developed where a group of medical students on placement were given real pagers. The students were informed that we would be running a simulation using the pagers. It was explained that they were expected to respond to the page, unless it was an emergency, they would then be told the reason for the page including the task they were expected to complete. It was explained that it was up to them to decide if the task was of higher importance than what they were currently doing. If what they were already doing had to be completed first we would move on to the next

student and page them back later. They were encouraged to prioritise tasks just as they will have to do as a resident doctor on the ward.

They were then paged 3 times during the work day by a member of the clinical skills team to attend the simulation lab to complete a task. The tasks are based around one patient's journey so they are also encouraged to ask about things like blood results when they come back to complete the next task just as they would with a real patient.

RESULT

The feedback from our students was very positive and they have said it has made them think about prioritising which tasks need done urgently and which can wait. They have also said how useful it is to get to know how to use the pager system before starting a job where they may be expected to use it.

DISCUSSION

After our initial trial we realised we had to give more information about prioritising jobs and not just leaving what you were doing to come to a page. We also had to be aware that pagers increase cognitive load so limited it to 3 pages over the day.

Yes very useful, getting used to being paged during other ward tasks and having to prioritise tasks was a learning curve - student feedback



TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- all students agreed it was useful to learn how to use pager system
- all students agreed it was useful to think about prioritising work load
- they said they enjoyed taking part in something different

CONCLUSION

The feedback that we have received from the medical students that took part was very positive and they feel that it has made them look at prioritising clinical tasks. Incorporating pagers into simulation training is a feasible and effective way to increase realism and teach prioritization and communication skills in a controlled environment. It has also given them the chance to learn how to use pagers in a controlled environment. Simulated pages engage medical students and may foster medical student preparedness for internship (Schwind et al, 2011).