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Experiences of University of Johannesburg Paramedic Students in the Debriefing of Patient Simulations Activities

Andrew R. Mosiane[1], Shirra Moch[2]

Abstract

Background:

Paramedics during their training are exposed to a variety of pedagogical approaches including Simulation Based Medical Education (SBME). SBME is adopted as an appropriate instructional design for Emergency Medical Care (EMC) training as it affords the students an opportunity to practise in a safe learning environment and narrows the theory practice gap. Post simulation debrief activity is a pivotal part of SBME as it presents the opportunity for students to reflect on practice and knowledge gaps.

Objective:

The study explored the experiences of paramedic students at the University of Johannesburg (UJ) in the debriefing of patient simulation based activities.

Methodology:

A descriptive qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews of the 4th year Bachelor of Health Science (BHSc) EMC students at the UJ was conducted. Data were analysed using the thematic analysis approach as described by Braun and Clarke.

Findings:

A total of 18 participants were interviewed face to face. The interviews were approximately 20 minutes long per participant. 3 themes encompassing 9 categories, emerged from the data: 1) debrief methodology 2) debrief role players and 3) debrief lived experience. Paramedic students at the University of Johannesburg, Department of EMC expressed an overall positive experience with patient simulation debriefing activity. The students also highlighted their concerns with regards to certain aspects of the patient simulation debrief: 1) the 2nd year experience in classroom practice simulation debriefing, 2) debriefing of assessment patient simulation across all years of study and 3) the lack of consistent structure for the patient simulation debriefing. Experiential learning theory and reflective practice remained the overall underpinning concepts for the effectiveness of patient simulation debrief as a learning experience.

Conclusion:

The study concludes that the paramedic students share the valuable role that patient simulation debriefing add as an integral part of SBME. The findings of this study further pave a way for future research within the field of EMC in SBME.

Keywords: *Simulation Debrief, SBME, EMS, EMC, Paramedics, Students, Experiential Learning, Reflective Practice*