The Operationalisation of a Simulation Centre in a New Graduate-Entry Medical School in Regional Australia

Kathleen Cartwright, David Birks, Caroline Rossetti, George Somers, Debra Nestel and Chris Browne

Aim

There is a distinct gap in the literature about the operationalisation of new Simulation Centres. To this end, we documented the opportunities and challenges of establishing and managing such a Simulation Centre in an equally new medical school.

Background

The Gippsland Medical School (GMS)—Monash University’s graduate-entry medical program based in regional Victoria—received its first student intake in 2008. A purpose-built Simulation Centre featuring a wide range of technological fidelity (from fully animated manikins driven by sophisticated software in immersive environments to low fidelity manikins and part-task trainers) was an integral part of the curriculum delivered to students.

Methods

We documented simulation activities during 2008, exploring student and staff experience and stakeholder feedback on the conduct and delivery of simulation activities.

Results

The high fidelity manikin, SimMan (Laerdal P/L, Oakleigh, Victoria), captured the imagination of the cohort, resulting in
high expectations of its integration in the teaching program.

The possibility of embedding the technology in the curriculum exposed areas of unmet need (staff training, management of student expectations). Supporting operational documentation was incomplete and complex.

Our results suggest that the following are important during the early initial phases of operationalisation of a Simulation Centre: rapid-cycle infrastructure testing, comprehensive user training, and complete documentation in an accessible form.

**Conclusions**

Our experience in the operationalisation of a new Simulation Centre highlights the limited value of technology as an end to itself. Adequate support, skills integration, trained staff, and cross-disciplinary involvement will provide opportunities for improvement in curriculum delivery.