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Advanced medical simulation serving pediatric cardiology: how can we increase the quality of our management without compromising patient safety?

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Introduction: Management of pediatric cardiac patients involves unique and complex physiology requiring an adequate knowledge and training of a multidisciplinary teamwork. Medical simulation has showed to be a good method of teaching clinical knowledge and procedural skills which can enhance patient safety. The aim of the study is to describe the initial experience of medical simulation in training pediatricians in cardiac critical situations.

Methods: We planned a course to train neonatologists, pediatric intensivists, pediatric residents and cardiology residents using real scenarios with high-fidelity manikins. Debriefing followed each scenario, focusing on key points of the management of cardiac critical events including basic concepts on echocardiography. Postparticipation questionnaires were used to know the effects on the participants.

Results: A total of 20 providers participated in the course. All participants scored the usefulness of the program and scenarios as 4 of 5 or higher (5 = most useful) and they would recommend the course to another physicians. 19 scored the way of learning the management of cardiac critical situation as 5 of 5. 19 found the model as an adequate tool of training. 12 perceived an improvement of the ability to manage a pediatric cardiac critical patient.

Conclusions: Advanced medical simulation is a good tool to train pediatricians in cardiac critical care situations in a safe environment. Participants found the practice useful and they would recommend to another physicians. Evidence is growing to support medical simulation as the training tool of the future in pediatric cardiology. Further work is needed to prove the benefits in real situations.