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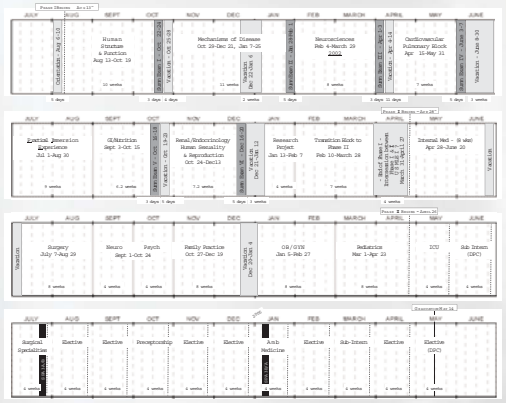
Teaching and Testing

The Simulated Patient Program at the University of New Mexico School of Medicine

Cheri N. Koinis, M.Ed. and Mike Murnik, M.D.

Introduction

The Simulated Patient Program has been in existence at the University of New Mexico (UNM) School of Medicine for close to 20 years. Simulated patients (SPs) are an integral part of the UNM's nationally recognized curriculum. Medical students work with SPs from their first day of medical school through their last Student Program Assessment during year four.



Program Description

Clinical Skills Course

Simulated Patients teach and assess medical students and physician assistant students in a variety of ways during Phase I. The 17 week clinical skills course begins on day one of medical school when students start learning basic interviewing skills with a simulated patient. The SPs help students learn the following skills:

- History taking
- Physical examination
- Gentiorectal exam
- Breast/Pelvic exam
- Interviewing

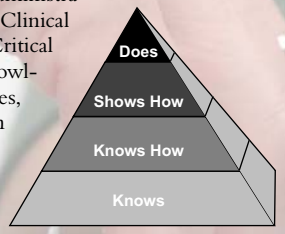


Objectives Structured Clinical Exams (OSCEs)

Administered at the end of Phase II clinical rotations in Family Practice and OB/GYN.

Student Progress Assessment (SPAs)

The SPA is a sequential, formative and summative exam, administered three times during the medical school curriculum. Complexity and standards increase with each administration. Competencies tested include; Clinical Skills, Communications Skills, Critical Reasoning and Integration of Knowledge, Professional Attitudes, Values, and Ethics, and Self-Assessment. In addition to acting, our simulated patients are also responsible for evaluating the student's performance using checklists pertaining to history taking, physical exam, and communications skills.



Advantages of Using Simulated Patients

- Provide a controlled and safe environment for learning clinical skills
- Provide an opportunity to practice and refine skills before working with a real patient
- Allows assessment of skills that can only be adequately assessed by the person being examined
- Provide immediate feedback to students
- Meets the requirements of the L.C.M.E. in providing performance-based exams

Disadvantages of Using Simulated Patients

- Labor intensive
- More expensive to run and score than paper and pencil tests
- Requires philosophical buy-in from administration, faculty, and staff (and student)

Training Simulated Patients

Our simulated patient trainer/program coordinator is responsible for interviewing, hiring, casting, training, scheduling, and supervising the SPs.

Training usually consists of four sessions lasting a minimum of one to two hours and are conducted by our SP trainer along with clinical faculty. The four sessions are broken down accordingly:

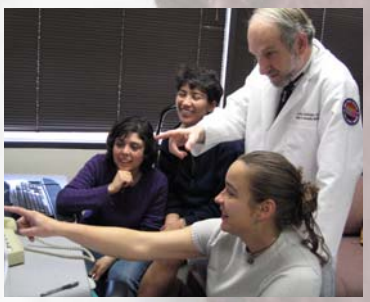
Session 1
Focuses on reviewing logistics, the purpose of the encounter, reviewing the script, and role-playing



Session 2
Focuses on history taking, physical exam skills and criteria for checklisting and role-playing

Session 3
Focuses on communication skills criteria for checklisting and role playing

Session 4
Integrates history taking, physical exam and communication skills and provides a final opportunity for reviewing criteria for checklisting and role playing





Future Goals

The SP program at the UNM School of Medicine has grown since it's inception more than 15 years ago, and we hope to expand even further to include working with students in the following areas; Physical Therapy, Occupational Therapy, PharmsDs, medical Residents, faculty involved in CME, and others. Future National Board exams may include the use of simulated patients, thus we are providing familiarity with this type of performance assessment.