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Glimpse into Simulation and Critical Thinking: A Pilot Study Comparing Utah and Ecuador

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Findings

- “I think simulation helps because as opposed to just reading it, you are actually doing it. Even though it’s not real life, not a real patient, you are still going through the motions and forming the skills. I think it helps because it is as close to real life as you can be without doing it on a real patient. It increases your ability, increases your confidence, and prepares you better.” -Utah Nursing Student
- “It did help in school to practice, but it’s a lot different than real life...[where as] in simulation you only get to do one thing but in real life you have to do a lot of different things.” -Ecuador Nurse



Background

- Classroom learning is practiced and applied through simulation, which can help develop critical thinking and clinical judgment skills imperative in clinical settings for both students and new nurse graduates.
- Simulation is well developed in the United States but is in early stages of use and development in South America.

Research Questions

- What is the role of simulation in nursing education in diverse programs?
- How can simulation improve new registered nurse graduates’ critical thinking/clinical judgment?

Study Procedures

- Descriptive qualitative research study
- Interviewed nursing students in Utah and recently graduated licensed nurses in Utah and Guayaquil, Ecuador
- Interviews were transcribed
- Categorical analysis of data was completed to identify common themes and responses across study groups

Levels of Simulation Used			
	Utah Nursing Students	Utah Registered Nurses	Ecuador Licensed Nurses
Low Fidelity	case studies	case studies	case studies
	manikin (static)	manikin (static)	manikin (static)
	manikin limbs	manikin limbs	leather/cloth
	role playing	role playing	meat
	pin cushions	fruit	fruit
Moderate Fidelity	manikins (with breath sounds, heart sounds)	manikins (with breath sounds, heart sounds)	—
	computer DVDs		—
	manikin (patient simulator)	manikin (patient simulator)	—

Themes of Simulation Use			
	Utah Nursing Students	Utah Registered Nurses	Ecuador Licensed Nurses
Themes	Safety in practice		
		Importance of experience with reality	
	Putting it together		

Benefits and Drawbacks of Simulation

	Utah Nursing Students	Utah Registered Nurses	Ecuador Licensed Nurses
Benefits of Simulation	helpful practice	helpful practice	helpful practice
	familiar with patterns and changes	familiar with patterns and changes	familiar with patterns and changes
	learning in safe environment	learning in safe environment	learning in safe environment
	expand theoretical knowledge	expand theoretical knowledge	expand theoretical knowledge
	familiar with common situations	familiar with common situations	
	recognize deviation, know response and priorities	recognize deviation, know response and priorities	
	remain calm in stressful situations	remain calm in stressful situations	
	evaluating performance to improve	evaluating performance to improve	
	treat patient, not just problem	treat patient, not just problem	
	increase confidence and comfort		
	good step in transition from classroom to hospital		
Drawbacks of Simulation	real patient differs from simulation	real patient differs from simulation	real patient differs from simulation
		little help with patient response and communication	prefer more time learning hands-on with real patient
		instructor overly involved; impeded learning	had learned many skills from prior job
		hospital experience more valuable	not learning skills and theory in conjunction

Conclusions

- The higher the fidelity of simulation, the greater benefit that exists to the learning and development of nurses, though nothing replaces experience with real patients.
- In Ecuador, with further advancement and development of simulation, the preparation and critical thinking of nurses may increase.

