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## Simplifying simulated practice for healthcare professionals and educators

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### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Simulation is almost synonymous with computerised mannequins although they are not always essential components of the learning experience as what often matters most is the facilitation process of the learning experience rather than the technology.

**Methods:** We developed Visually Enhanced Mental Simulation (VEMS) for staff to demonstrate cognitive and decision making skills away from the practical context. Scenario participants are oriented by facilitators to the VEMS process which is a simulation approach that involves a whiteboard, laminated cards, and a poster to represent equipment and the patient. It requires participants to verbalise thoughts and actions including equipment settings, and actual communication with the patient and bystanders represented by the facilitators. Information like physiological parameters and interventions made by the participating crew are written on the whiteboard. Scenarios use the same scripts as what is prepared for full-scale simulation and are followed by a debriefing. It is complemented by parallel skills sessions, and ultimately both aspects are combined into full-scale scenario-based simulation.

**Results:** VEMS has been facilitated with uni/multi-professional teams of healthcare professionals for pre-hospital, interfacility, and handover scenarios. Comparison between VEMS and mannequin-based scenarios is ongoing and currently shows just a slightly less positive rating for VEMS although they advocate for this modality prior to full-scale simulation. VEMS reduces pressure on equipment demand and the staff engagement is such that similar clinical practitioner's mistakes are "observed" in both types of simulation approaches.

**Conclusion:** VEMS can be run almost anywhere as it requires a minimum of equipment but still requires time and experienced facilitators. Briefing about the process and expectations are as important as the preparation of the scenario script and clinical knowledge and facilitation style of the facilitators. VEMS can be very engaging for multiprofessional teams and address learning outcomes similar to what would be achieved in full-scale simulation.

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