

# THE DAY THE SIMULATOR DIED – A PILOT

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### Background:

Healthcare professionals who are involved with the unexpected death of a child face a dual dilemma in coping with one of the most challenging tasks a professional can ever encounter, compounded by feeling underprepared because it remains an infrequent and sporadic event <sup>1,2</sup>

An inter-professional simulation day was designed to help prepare learners for being faced with unexpected child death.

The day comprised:

- Introductory lectures covering: APLS management of cardiac arrest, local child death guidelines & issues to consider around stopping resuscitation efforts
- Two high fidelity simulation scenarios of unsuccessful resuscitations – these included the presence of a simulated parent
- Focused communication skills sessions: breaking bad news & explaining local child death procedures



### METHOD:

Immediate feedback was sought on the day

A follow up questionnaire was sent 4 months later to explore further the educational value of the day – these are the results presented.

### DEMOGRAPHICS OF PARTICIPANTS:

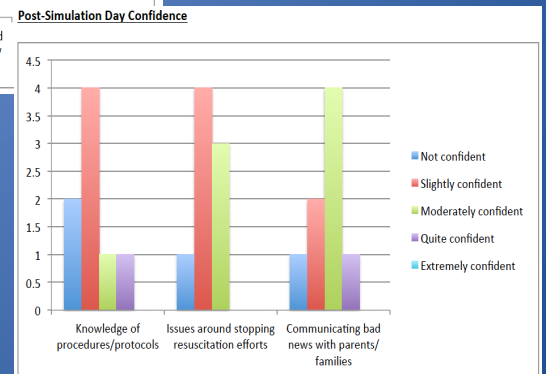
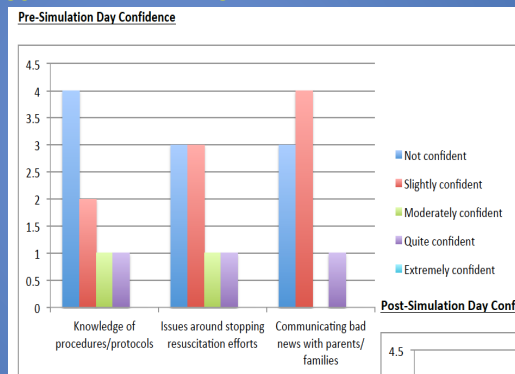
Consultant Paediatrician	1
Level 3 Paediatric Trainees	2
Level 1 Paediatric Trainees	2
Broad Based Training Trainee	1
Paediatric Staff Nurses	3

\* 8 out of 9 participants completed the follow up questionnaire  
The difference in nursing & medical participants reflects the differences in provision of study leave between the groups.

### KEY FEEDBACK THEMES:

- **Lack of experience** – 5 out of 8 respondents had never had experience of breaking bad news or had been the primary deliverer of bad news on fewer than 5 occasions
- **Lack of formal training** – 50% had no formal training on child death procedures or breaking bad news
- **Limited workplace exposure** – few informal training opportunities
- **Simulated parents** – valuable & increased realism of scenarios

### A POSITIVE INTERVENTION



"The actress who played the mum was invaluable to the simulation as she made it a lot more realistic"

"I found that the simulation then breaking bad news simulation really useful"

### PARTICIPANTS COMMENTS

"I have felt much more confident particularly when talking to parents"

"I have had the opportunity since to put into practice the knowledge I learnt. My experience allowed me to help break the bad news to the parents and i felt more confident in the procedures following a child death"

### CONCLUSIONS:

- **Our multi-disciplinary simulation day resulted in increased confidence**
- **Simulation compliments learning in the workplace & can prepare learners for real patient contact especially for an infrequent & challenging event**

### References:

1. Harrison ME, Walling A. What do we know about giving bad news? A review. *Clinical Pediatrics* 2010; 49 (7): 619 – 626.
2. Meyer EC et al. Difficult conversations: Improving communication skills and relational abilities in health care. *Pediatr Crit Care Med* 2009; 10: 352 – 359.