

## **Coming Out of the Dark:**

### **A curriculum for teaching and evaluating radiology residents' communications skills through simulation**

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**Purpose:** The purpose of this project is to develop a curriculum to teach radiology residents communication skills through simulation. Communication skills are a core competency for which radiology residents must be evaluated. As Radiology has moved from “film” to PACS, opportunities for direct communication between Radiologists and referring clinicians have decreased. Additionally, radiologists increasingly must communicate effectively with patients. Simulation has been shown an effective tool, and we believe it can be used to teach and evaluate communication skills for radiology residents.

**Materials and Methods:** Current first (N=5) and fourth year (N=3) radiology residents (PGY 2 and PGY 5) participated in 6 baseline communication scenarios with trained professional patient “actors”. Scenarios included error and apology, delivering bad news, canceling examination/procedure, radiation risk counseling, giving results in pediatric imaging and angry referring physician. Resident performance in the scenarios was evaluated by attending radiologists with prior communication skills training and the patient actors, using the Gap-Kalamazoo Communication Skills (GKCS) Assessment Form. All activities were videotaped at our interprofessional Center for Experiential Learning and Simulation (iCELS). Immediately following completion of all 6 scenarios, residents were debriefed, and defined teaching points were identified. Following a 2 week washout period and additional training, residents participated in a second similar simulation.

**Results:** The average GKCS score for all the residents improved to 79% (range 66-86%) in part 2 compared to 74% (range 65-82%) in part 1. Fourth year residents performed better on both part 1 and 2 of the simulation when compared to first year residents. Average fourth year's score for part 1 was 77% vs. 72% for first year residents. Average fourth year's score for part 2 was 81% vs. 76% for first year residents.

**Conclusion:** Simulation is a promising method for teaching and evaluating residents' communication skills.

**Clinical Relevance:** Simulation can be used to teach and evaluate radiology residents' communication skills in compliance with the core competency requirement.