

Virtual patient simulation to improve nurses' relational skills in a continuing education context

Submission date 03/07/2020	Recruitment status No longer recruiting	<input type="checkbox"/> Prospectively registered <input type="checkbox"/> Protocol
Registration date 03/07/2020	Overall study status Completed	<input type="checkbox"/> Statistical analysis plan <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Results
Last Edited 17/03/2022	Condition category Other	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual participant data

Plain English summary of protocol

Background and study aims

Nurses must meet professional standards by attending continuing education activities. Despite the potential of virtual patient simulation in nursing education, it has rarely been used in nurses' continuing education to address relational skills. We developed an automated virtual patient simulation informed by motivational interviewing to enhance nurses' relational skills. The simulation features an HIV-positive man struggling to adhere to his medication. Quizzes and feedback loops embedded in the simulation allow learners to observe the consequences of their choices. This study aimed to assess nurses' perception of simulation's acceptability. Specific objectives were: to measure the simulation design elements, its role in supporting practice, its quality and technology acceptance, and the achievement of learning objectives; to explore nurses' learning experience.

Who can participate?

French-speaking registered nurses working in Quebec, Canada, who self-reported as having basic computer skills.

What does the study involve?

Nurses have to fill out a first online questionnaire to get an overall picture of their sociodemographic characteristics (e.g. age, experience as nurses, etc). Then, they are invited to consult the virtual patient simulation, which is a form of digital training lasting 45 minutes, to help them in consolidating their communications skills with the virtual patient. When they complete their participation in the virtual patient simulation, they are invited to complete an online questionnaire (around 20 minutes). The last step, involving the nurses who want to share their experience of having participated in the virtual patient simulation, is the online focus group (qualitative data collection).

What are the possible benefits and risks of participating?

The possible benefits are: the improvement of nurses' communication skills, the awareness of their own communication style, the identification of nurses' strengths and weaknesses. The risk of participating is the stress caused by the use of a computer.

Where is the study run from?

This is an online study. All the nurses from Quebec have access to it. However, the study is run from Montreal (Canada)

When is the study starting and how long is it expected to run for?

August 2018 to September 2019.

Who is funding the study?

The development of this simulation was funded by a student project grant from Quebec Network on Nursing Intervention Research, by a planning and dissemination grant from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) [144030], and by a doctoral scholarship allocated to GR from the CIHR [337439]. GR received doctoral scholarships from the Quebec Network on Nursing Intervention Research, the Fonds de recherche du Québec santé, the CIHR, and Quebec's Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur.

Who is the main contact?

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Contact information

Type(s)

Scientific

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Additional identifiers

EudraCT/CTIS number

Nil known

IRAS number

ClinicalTrials.gov number

Nil known

Secondary identifying numbers

Nil known

Study information

Scientific Title

Virtual patient simulation to improve nurses' relational skills in a continuing education context:
A convergent mixed-methods study

Study objectives

This study aimed to quantitatively and qualitatively assess the acceptability of a virtual patient (VP) simulation to improve nurses' relational skills in a continuing education (CE) context. Our specific research objectives were: a) to measure the extent of the VP simulation nurses' perceived acceptability in regards of the simulation design elements, of the global system quality and the technology acceptance, of the role simulation plays in supporting nurses' professional practice, and of the achievement of learning objectives; b) to explore nurses' learning experience; c) to deepen understanding of how the VP simulation can contribute to nurses' uptake of relational skills, to overall learning and its transfer into practice.

Ethics approval required

Old ethics approval format

Ethics approval(s)

Approved 20/11/2018, Research Ethics Committee of the University of Montreal Hospital Centre (Tour R, 900 St-Denis Street, 3rd floor, Montreal, Qc/Canada, H2X 0A9; 1-514-890-8000, extension14485; ethique.recherche.chum@ssss.gouv.qc.ca), ref 18.243

Study design

Multicenter interventional study

Primary study design

Interventional

Secondary study design

Mixed methods study (pre-experimental design and qualitative exploratory design)

Study setting(s)

Internet/virtual

Study type(s)

Other

Participant information sheet

Not available in web format, please use contact details to request a participant information sheet

Health condition(s) or problem(s) studied

The simulation is about nurses' communication skills in a situation of medication non-adherence

Interventions

A convergent mixed methods study. First, a pre-experimental study is performed with a one-group post-test design to measure nurses' perceptions of the VP simulation. Second, a qualitative exploratory design is used to describe nurses' learning experience and to further nuance and deepen understanding of the acceptability of the intervention by using complementary topics that are not covered by the quantitative component.

A Web- and screen-based program, available on computer or tablet, that allows learners to interact with a two-dimensional animated human character called the "virtual patient." Learners emulate the role of the healthcare providers, within a first-person perspective.

There is one 45-minutes consultation session.

Regarding the pre-experimental nature of the trial, there is no control group.

Intervention Type

Behavioural

Primary outcome measure

1. VP simulation design elements; global system quality and technology acceptance; role of simulation in supporting nurses' professional practice and achievement of learning objectives are measured with a 4-points Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = Strongly agree) post-intervention (no timeline).

2. In the qualitative data collection at a single timepoint post-intervention, these topics are of interest: motivations, perceived difficulties for study participation, and concrete implications for nursing practice following participation in the virtual patient simulation.

Secondary outcome measures

There are no secondary outcome measures

Overall study start date

01/08/2018

Completion date

24/09/2019

Eligibility

Key inclusion criteria

1. Registered nurses working in Quebec (Canada)
2. Self-reported having basic computer literacy skills
3. Understand and speak French.

Participant type(s)

Health professional

Age group

Adult

Sex

Both

Target number of participants

30

Total final enrolment

54

Key exclusion criteria

Does not meet inclusion criteria

Date of first enrolment

24/03/2019

Date of final enrolment

24/08/2019

Locations

Countries of recruitment

Canada

Study participating centre

University of Montreal Hospital Centre

1000, Rue Saint-Denis

Montreal

Canada

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Sponsor information

Organisation

Université Laval

Sponsor details

Pavillon Ferdinand-Vandry

1050, avenue de la Médecine

local 3645

Quebec

Canada

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fsi@fsi.ulaval.ca

Sponsor type

Other

Website

<https://www.fsi.ulaval.ca/>

ROR

<https://ror.org/04sjchr03>

Funder(s)

Funder type

Government

Funder Name

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

Alternative Name(s)

Instituts de Recherche en Santé du Canada, Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), CIHR_IRSC, Canadian Institutes of Health Research | Ottawa ON, CIHR, IRSC

Funding Body Type

Government organisation

Funding Body Subtype

National government

Location

Canada

Funder Name

Réseau de recherche portant sur les interventions en sciences infirmières du Québec

Alternative Name(s)

Quebec Network on Nursing Intervention Research, Réseau RRISIQ Network, Réseau de recherche en interventions en sciences infirmières du Québec, RRISIQ

Funding Body Type

Private sector organisation

Funding Body Subtype

Other non-profit organizations

Location

Canada

Funder Name

Funder Name

Quebec Ministry of Higher Education

Results and Publications

Publication and dissemination plan

Publication in BMC Nursing

Intention to publish date

06/07/2020

Individual participant data (IPD) sharing plan

The datasets generated during and/or analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Geneviève Rouleau, Genevieve.rouleau.chum@ssss.gouv.qc.ca

Type of data: descriptive statistical analyses

Data anonymisation and individual information will be changed to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants' identity.

No date is fixed because the datasets will become available only if the principal investigator has reasonable request. Because the study's findings are part of Geneviève Rouleau's PhD thesis, the datasets won't be available until the final deposit of the thesis will be approved by Université Laval.

IPD sharing plan summary

Available on request

Study outputs

Output type	Details	Date created	Date added	Peer reviewed?	Patient-facing?
Results article		04/01/2022	17/03/2022	Yes	No