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Introduction:

This is a randomized controlled study aiming to assess the impact of an e-learning and a 2-hour role-play training in breaking bad news (BBN). BBN is an extremely stressful task for medical students [1-2]. Many do not feel sufficiently trained [3], while some widespread guidelines such as the SPIKES protocol exist [4]. The benefits of these protocols have been demonstrated in the oncology field [5], but little studied in the emergency field.

Methods:

Medical trainees and residents were randomly assigned to the control group (CG) or to the experimental group (EG). Only EG received the e-learning and 2-hour role-play training. Both groups were assessed twice: at T0 and T1 (three weeks later). Each assessment included a video-recorded role-play with two actors playing the role of relatives, and questionnaires. Two blinded experts rated the videos.

Results:

Out of 80 participants, 80% were trainees and 20% were anaesthesia residents. EG (n=43) and CG (n=37) were not different at baseline on the several variables. There were significant group and time interaction effects. Only EG increased their self-efficacy (from 2.6 to 85.4%, $p < 0.001$). EG improved more than CG their skills (respectively +86.5% and +13.8%, $p < 0.001$) and EG decreased more than CG their inadequate communication skills ($p < 0.0001$).

Conclusion:

A 2-hour role-play simulation blended with an e-learning on BBN in the emergency field appears to offer interesting perspectives. It enables a feasible approach as regards the acute care settings. Impact on real patients requires further evaluation in clinical settings.

References:

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