

A Qualitative Study of DCTs' Perceptions of Preparedness Following Simulation

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Objectives:

The evidence demonstrates that many Dental Core Trainees (DCT) feel unprepared to manage the unwell patients and emergent situations encountered during Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery (OMFS) posts. Simulation-based education (SBE) is an educational intervention which can facilitate learning without compromising patient safety. To the author's knowledge there is no other empirical qualitative research addressing the preparedness of DCTs following SBE for emergencies. Therefore, this study was justified and worthwhile in the context of NHS England funding such a course for DCTs.

This study aimed to explore how a one-day, high-fidelity SBE course could enhance DCTs preparedness for their OMFS jobs.

Methods:

A qualitative paradigm was followed to investigate the research question using the conceptual frameworks of social cognitive theory and experiential learning theory.

Eight consenting DCTs who had attended an SBE course were selected by purposive, non-random sampling. They underwent individual semi-structured interviews to explore how SBE impacted their preparedness, and the data underwent thematic analysis. No external funding.

Results:

Four main themes were generated: Realism; Safe Learning Environment; Community of Practice; and DCT as a Unique Experience.

The results outlined the importance of physical and psychological fidelity within the SBE design, debrief facilitated by experienced, multidisciplinary faculty and incorporation of learning through peer-observation, as important SBE features to advance DCT learning and subsequent preparedness. Results highlighted the difficulties DCTs face in OMFS jobs and the unparalleled learning experience such posts provide.

Conclusion:

This study has highlighted key areas which could be targeted during induction and teaching to facilitate the transition to a new working environment. This study found that a one-day high fidelity SBE course can increase DCTs' preparedness through realistic but safe experience of emergency scenarios, affording physical, academic and

psychological preparation. The results suggest SBE can increase perceptions of preparedness but may not infer absolute preparedness.