

Teaching and Assessing Communication Skills in Anesthesiology

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Setting:

Anesthesiology residency program

Need:

Effective communication is a competency required of residents by the ACGME. Teaching communication skills in Anesthesiology is particularly challenging given the current work environment.

Action:

With IRB approval and following APS/NIH guidelines, we developed a standardized patient(SP) program to teach and evaluate communication skills in Anesthesiology residents. The program consists of 5 workshops in combination with a SP pre test and post test. The workshops, 1.5 hours long, center on the topics of: Giving Bad News, Medical Error, Informed Consent, Cross-Cultural Communication and Communicating with an Angry Patient. The pre test and post test consist of 5 cases, each evaluating one of the workshop skill sets. The workshops include a DVD based interactive presentation with faculty-led discussion followed by a skills practice session with SP scenarios that have been adapted to be relevant to the specialty. Each sp practice session is followed by peer and faculty discussion and critique.

Impact:

The CREATE program combines a tightly structured workshop design featuring skills modeled by expert clinicians with the realism of a standardized patient encounter. It is our hope that this program will not only develop high level communication skills among our residents but also provide the framework for education and evaluation for other ACGME competencies.