

# COVID-19 EFFECTS ON THE PERFORMANCE OF RESPIRATORY CARE STUDENT'S STANDARDIZED PATIENT ENCOUNTER

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## INTRODUCTION

- The incorporation of clinical simulation (CS) in healthcare curriculum is relatively new, more specifically to respiratory care (RC). CS and standardized patient (SP) encounters are increasingly utilized to assess and prepare students for patient care in programs such as nursing, dental and medical schools.
- Preparation for this simulated experience has been offered in person for several years in our Division of RC.
- During the global COVID-19 pandemic, much of education has shifted virtually and daily human interactions are complicated by safety protocols and fear of viral exposure.
- The aim of this study was to determine if the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the UT Health San Antonio Respiratory Care's first-year students' SP encounter performance when compared to pre-pandemic groups.

## METHODS

- Retrospective review of faculty evaluations of respiratory therapy student (RTS) performance from a patient-encounter database.
- RTS (Bachelor's and Master's degree) engaged in an encounter with a SP presenting with cough and shortness of breath.
- This evaluations included 2018-2019 (pre-COVID group) and 2020(COVID group).
- Faculty graded 54 different tasks (scale 1-100) to comprehensively assess interviewing skills during the simulated encounter.
- IRB approval was obtained.

## RESULTS

- Scores from 142 students were included in the study.
- The COVID group scored lower on 28 (51.9%) of the 54 areas evaluated compared to pre-COVID group and in 19 (73.1%) of those areas there was a  $\geq 15\%$  decrease in scores.
- A significant drop ( $P < 0.05$ ) was found in areas such identifying themselves or their role (96.9% vs. 15%); offering water/tissue to SP when coughing (71.6% vs.39.4%); asking for onset of symptom (69.3% vs. 33.3%); asking about health screening (65.85 vs.46.9%), sleep quality (60.4% vs. 28.8%), diet (74.3% vs. 50%), weight changes (44.7% vs. 13.6%),and hobbies (47.7% vs. 21.2%).

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that RTS performance in this preclinical simulated encounter was negatively impacted by the COVID-19 virtual learning. Decreased in the face-to-face learning experience during the COVID-19 pandemic can negatively impact teaching of other academic

Evaluator Scoring of Student-Patient Interview				
Task	Subtask	2018	2019	2020
		n	n	n
		%	%	%
Entrance	Knocked Before Entering	96.88	96.88	97
	Introduced Self	100	100	88
	Identified Role/Position	96.88	96.88	15
	Used Patient Name	78.13	78.13	62
Overall	Made Eye Contact	93.75	93.75	92
	Showed Compassion	75	59.09	53
	Offered water/tissue	75	68.18	39.39
Symptom 1	Recognized Symptom	62.5	25	62.12
	Onset	100	97.73	96.97
	Progression of Cough	84.4	70.45	63.64
	Alleviating Factors	90.7	86.36	83.33
	Exacerbating Factors	78.2	79.55	60.61
	Sputum Description	100	97.73	92.42
	Associated Symptoms	78.2	61.36	42.42

Highlight Key:  
 A (90-100%) – Green  
 B (80-89%) – Orange  
 C (75-79%) – Yellow  
 F (<75%) – Red