

33 “Acting” Interns, Assessing When Graduating Medical Students Call for Help, a Simulated Capstone Experience

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Background: In recent years some medical schools have developed Capstone courses to help prepare medical students to enter residency training. These courses may also provide an opportunity to assess entrustable professional activities.

Objectives: We developed a Capstone experience to assess how often and why graduating medical students call for help when encountering medical emergencies. We hypothesized that student’s would call a senior resident (SR) for varying reasons.

Methods: A post-course survey was used to assess how often and why students call for help. We designed 2 simulation cases; acute pulmonary edema with severely elevated blood pressure (SEBP), COPD exacerbation leading to PEA arrest (COPD). A SR was available for phone consultation, they would respond to the bedside for the COPD case. This case also incorporated a nurse. Students worked in groups of 3.

Results: 46 groups attended the exercise; post-course surveys were completed by groups, not individual students. For the SEBP case, 29 groups (64%, n-45) called the SR. The most common reasons were; assistance with therapeutic management (79%, 23/29), we were in over our heads (38%, 11/29), assistance with diagnostic work-up (31%, 9/29). Seven groups (24%, n-29) felt they should have called sooner. Twenty-eight groups (97%, n-29) noted that the advice changed management. For the COPD case, 24 groups (55%, n-44) called the SR without prompting by the nurse, the nurse prompted 12 groups (27%) to call, for eight groups (18%), the nurse called the SR. The most common reasons were; assistance with therapeutic management (55%, n-44), we-re in over our heads (55%), need for the resident to come to the bedside (48%). Twenty-three groups (52%, n-44) called the SR before the patient went into PEA arrest. Thirty-one groups (71%, n-44) felt they should have called sooner.

Conclusions: When encountering simulated emergencies, graduating medical students will commonly call for help, often for assistance with therapeutic management.