New Article Format - COVID-19 Brief Reports

Mark W. Scerbo, Ph.D., FHFES, FSSH
Editor-in-Chief, Simulation in Healthcare

Like many journals serving the health sciences community, we are receiving a lot of content on COVID-19. I am pleased to report that we have published our first article on this topic which will appear in the August issue. Sui An Lie and her colleagues submitted a manuscript describing their proactive use of in situ simulation to ensure operating room facility preparedness at Singapore General Hospital. The article contains insights and lessons learned from a team faced with a viral outbreak in the days before the WHO declared COVID-19 a pandemic. This article is designated Free Access. Our publisher, Wolters Kluwer, has agreed to make all COVID-19 content freely accessible to the public for the first 2 months.

Since March, we have received over 40 submissions on this topic in all formats – empirical studies, technical reports, comments and commentary, letters-to-the editor, and even a Reflections on Simulation piece. Most manuscripts have offered descriptions of efforts to train and prepare providers and we have several such publications in the pipeline for future issues. We cannot publish all of these manuscripts and, frankly, some of the efforts of centers to adapt have become common. However, we also recognize that there may be valuable lessons and ideas among these papers that would benefit the broader healthcare simulation community. Consequently, we are initiating a new article format for COVID-19 center responses.

We will publish COVID-19 Brief Reports. These articles are intended for communicating how centers are using simulation to change and improve their processes and procedures in response to the pandemic. The brief reports must address the problem, the solution, and lessons learned in under 1000 words and without any references. Additional material can be included as Supplemental Digital Content. Preference will be given to submissions that offer innovative solutions that can be easily adopted and applied broadly.

The COVID-19 Brief Reports are not a substitute for traditional submissions. We continue to look for manuscripts describing novel applications and research in healthcare simulation that go beyond how centers have responded. We are interested in empirical research and solutions supported by objective data. We are also interested in topics that capture how the pandemic currently affects the delivery of care, what may be needed in the future, and the unique role of simulation in these efforts. Sample topics could include:

- patient and provider safety
- noncompliance with new safety measures
- how teams and communication are affected by PPE
- simulations to assess large-scale institutional readiness or multi-site efforts
• psychological effects of PPE, social distancing, and quarantine on patients and providers
• virtual solutions for training and assessment