Developing communication and clinical skills via simulations integrated throughout the curriculum.

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**Context:** Clinical skills and reasoning are emphasized greatly in most athletic training programs, but communication skills, which are vital for health care professionals, may not be given the focus that is necessary. Upon entering the workforce, athletic trainers must be able to communicate with many health care professionals, as well as coaches and parents, regarding patient care. Often, educators rely on opportunities in clinical education experiences to develop communication skills, but those opportunities may be limited in some clinical settings. In addition to clinical skills, simulations can develop students’ communication with other health care professionals, as well as their communication skills in difficult situations. However, the appropriate use of simulations requires strategic planning, and educators need to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to use this education strategy. **Objective:** The objective of this poster is to disseminate how simulations can be utilized and integrated throughout an athletic training curriculum to develop students’ communication skills with patients, health care providers, and others as well as develop their clinical skills. **Background:** Simulation is defined as learners engaging in a lifelike experience with varying levels of fidelity to mimic a real clinical encounter. The use of simulation is common in medical and nursing education. A recent meta-analysis reported that simulation-based education is superior to traditional didactic and clinical education to enhance knowledge, clinical skill performance, confidence, and critical thinking. In medicine and nursing, simulation that focused on improving communication skills was shown to significantly improve the communication skills of students. **Description:** We have implemented simulations within the curriculum to systematically develop students’ communication and clinical skills. This communication ranges from simple to more complex discussions, such as conflict resolution, patient presentation to a health care provider, and change in lifestyle discussions. Each semester, students engage in two or three simulations to develop their communication and clinical skills related to the course content. This poster will describe our integration plan as well as the successes and challenges of using simulations. **Clinical Advantage:** The development of communication and clinical skills requires practice and opportunities for feedback, which simulations can provide. Due to the unpredictable nature of clinical education experiences, students may not have regular opportunities to practice and refine their communication skills with health care professionals, coaches, or parents. Rather than leaving the development of communication skills to chance, a deliberate plan will develop these skills in a progressive fashion. **Conclusions:** The development of communication and clinical skills is important to emphasize throughout the athletic training program in order to produce competent health care professionals who can communicate effectively. Simulations can provide students with safe opportunities to develop these communication skills, along with the appropriate clinical skills. With countless scenarios, simulations can be performed in a multitude of classes, with communication and clinical skills building upon one another. A simulation which develops communication and clinical skills could easily be integrated in a variety of ways in order
to meet the needs of students. **Key Words:** professional attributes, clinical skill acquisition, athletic training student. Word Count: 498