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Title: A Novel Approach to Simulated Learning in Speech Pathology

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Introduction/Background
Increasing numbers of speech pathology students in Australia is placing a strain on clinical placements. Simulated learning is recognised as offering similar educational opportunities to traditional clinical placements, and may be used to supplement student training.

Purpose/Objectives
This study investigated the impact of delivering simulated learning using in-person and videoconferencing technology modalities, to speech pathology students.

Issues/Questions for exploration or ideas for discussion
Thirty-six students participated in four simulation sessions designed to develop skills in clinical areas that are difficult to offer in traditional placements. The first simulation was conducted in-person while subsequent simulations occurred via the WebEx videoconferencing platform. Simulated patients were used throughout. Data was collected pre- and post-simulations using questionnaires based on the reaction, learning and behaviour levels of the Kirkpatrick model, and the System Usability Scale.

Results
All students responded to the surveys. The Intrinsic Motivation Inventory indicated students' perceived moderate to high levels of interest, competence and confidence (means ranged 3.9-6.7 on a 7-point scale). Students perceived a positive impact on communication, assessment and management performance (means ranged 5.0-6.2 on a 7-point scale). Students rated the usability of WebEx below the usable level of 68 (mean = 66).

Discussion
The results were positive, with students reporting gains in communication, assessment and management. Qualitative feedback indicated technology barriers presented a challenge.

Conclusion
Simulated learning via videoconferencing can offer similar opportunities to traditional placements. Data suggests students benefitted in the areas of communication, assessment and management, which may have broad application to their development as health professionals.