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Learning and teaching in pre-hospital (ambulance) obstetrics

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Statement of Problem: General obstetrics training is core to paramedic curriculum and targets normal deliveries as well as key emergency procedures for complicated deliveries. However training is generally quite limited and is frequently taught by paramedic educators and academics whose clinical birthing experience may be limited. Procedural training is limited to simulation models and few undergraduate Paramedic programs contain any obstetric clinical placement. Despite this limited training, paramedics are expected to be able to manage complicated birth, diagnose and treat a wide array of obstetric emergencies as soon as they enter the workforce. We sought to determine whether there is any peer reviewed evidence of a direct correlation between obstetric capability/confidence and educator type for paramedics.

Methodology: A review of the emergency pre-hospital peer-reviewed literature using ProQuest, EBSCOhost and CINAHL data bases were undertaken to determine the current body of knowledge about efficacy of paramedic obstetric training and confidence levels.

Results: The peer reviewed literature is virtually silent on the efficacy of paramedic obstetric training and/or confidence levels; or patient satisfaction with pre-hospital obstetric care. The literature does indicate high incidence of complex birth in the pre-hospital environment in some settings although anecdotally paramedic deliveries are relatively rare in Australia. Evidence suggests that paramedics do not feel confident managing normal birth and some authors cite a lack of clinical experience and case exposure as a potential reason for this.

Conclusion & Significance: The authors have developed and implemented an interdisciplinary model of paramedic education. Our approach uses midwives and dual qualified paramedic/midwives as educators to determine whether student engagement, confidence and competency are enhanced. Evaluation of this new approach to teaching will fill an important gap in the literature and possibly improve end user experience and outcomes in relation normal and complicated unexpected pre-hospital obstetric cases.

Biography

Shonel Hall has her expertise in Advanced Care Paramedic. She is Associate Lecturer in Queensland University of Technology, Australia.

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