

The Shock Course: A comprehensive approach to rural emergency medicine

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Context/Setting: Rural physicians in British Columbia identify knowledge and specific skills in Emergency Medicine as one of their top learning needs. For example, in rural emergency rooms there is no immediate specialist backup; it is therefore challenging for rural practitioners to keep pace and maintain skills with the most up-to-date concepts and strategies in shock diagnosis and management.

Intervention: In direct consultation with rural physicians, UBC Continuing Professional Development (UBC CPD) and Rural Continuing Professional Development (RCPD) developed a 7-hour interprofessional continuing education Shock Course for rural physicians, nurses and paramedics. Course instructors are rural practitioners with emergency room experience. The course combines lectures, case and scenario discussions, and hands-on practice.

Observations: Since 2009, the Shock Course has been delivered to 27 rural communities in BC, with over 400 participants. Participant feedback highlights that: 1) this course takes a comprehensive approach to help participants recognize the various symptoms of shock and how to resuscitate patients; 2) instructors who convey the main information are experienced and credible emergency care providers; 3) the hands-on component is made up of “digestible pieces” for the learners; and 4) target audience-specified content is well-received by learners.

Discussion: This course has fostered practice improvement in the area of shock management for rural practitioners. The learning is rich on multiple practice levels, the practitioners are taught that shock has to be recognized and treated promptly. The course provides resources that can be used post-course in the rural emergency departments which supports practitioners on an ongoing basis.

Keywords: rural CME; shock diagnosis and management; comprehensive course

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