

(Oral Presentation - Education Innovation)

Title: Managing third trimester patients in rural communities: A novel ultrasound training program

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Context/Setting:

To date, there have been no point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS) education opportunities for rural family physicians (FPs) who provide third trimester maternity care in British Columbia. This has resulted in barriers for rural FPs who may have access to an ultrasound machine, but lack the skills and/or training to use this tool safely. To address this gap, a novel education program was developed to support FP acquisition of third trimester POCUS skill.

Intervention:

The POCUS-OB Course is a one-day traveling course that visits rural and regional hospitals in BC. The course format alternates between lecture and hands-on practice for identifying specific indications including fetal heartbeat, fetal lie, and amniotic fluid volume. Unique features of the course include: 1) a high volume of models who are in their third trimester, allowing for a high volume of scans, 2) a low instructor to learner ratio, 3) interprofessional faculty, and 4) comprehensive pre-course preparation, which increases supervised hands-on practice time.

Observations:

Course evaluations show a 100% increase in participant self-perceived confidence in performing POCUS on third trimester patients, and a 77% increase in skill when looking for specific indications (n=42). Further, participants stated that the most effective aspects of the course were the low instructor to learner ratio and conducting a high volume of scans on live models.

Discussion:

Evaluation findings to date show that this course effectively facilitates the acquisition of hands-on skill with third trimester POCUS. In a rural setting, the skills learned in this course could mean expedited urgent transfer to a higher level of care for high-risk patients, or confirmation of a low-risk patient who can continue to be managed in her own community.

Keywords: ultrasound, obstetrics, CME