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MORE MOCCA PLEASE - ADDRESSING A TRAINING DEFICIT: DESIGNING A NOVEL COURSE FOR SENIOR TRAINEE ANAESTHETISTS

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Introduction and Aims

The 2021 RCoA curriculum requires stage 3 anaesthetic trainees to provide “emergency anaesthetic care for paediatric patients pending interhospital transfer to a tertiary unit.” Clinical experience and training on this subject is limited in our region, with no formalised teaching currently in place.

We developed a trainee-conceived, expert-delivered regional course to address this, providing a forum to consolidate skills, knowledge and confidence in stabilising the sick child. The concept is distinct from managing paediatric anaesthetic emergencies and recognised resuscitation courses. The course concentrates on the role of the anaesthetist in this situation and is named MOCCA: Management of the Critically unwell Child for Anaesthetists.

Methods

We formed a committee to design and deliver the course, comprising three anaesthetic consultants and five senior anaesthetic registrars with a range of paediatric and education experience.

We surveyed:

Senior anaesthetic trainees to gauge areas of most concern

Paediatric anaesthetic regional leads to establish common presentations

Candidates before and after the course.

Course Design: We designed the course to enable the general anaesthetist to manage a critically unwell child within an interprofessional team. We compiled learning objectives using curriculum-mapped key capabilities, survey results, committee experience and expert advice. Course material, incorporating several teaching modalities, was developed by the committee and reviewed by regional PICU experts.

Delivery: The first course will be delivered in April 2023. We will run the course biannually to maximise accessibility. Costs relate to venue hire, catering and travel. The course has Head of School approval to ensure candidates are reimbursed.

Results

Pre-course:

These surveys informed course content, which focuses on:

The role of the anaesthetist in managing a sick child

Skill stations: airway management, ventilation, drugs and infusions, vascular access, transfer preparation

Case-based discussions: critical airway, head injury, seizures

Simulation: sepsis, collapsed neonate.

Post-course:

First course feedback will highlight areas for continued improvement. Within 48 hours of advertising the first course we had reached our agreed limit of eight candidates, providing an early indication that the concept is welcomed by trainees.

Discussion and Conclusion

This course addresses current training provision deficits. It will help trainees to achieve key competencies and gain confidence in the anaesthetic management of sick children. Financial and educational sustainability will be achieved by:

Focussing on relevant topics and low-fidelity simulation to maximise time for useful learning discussions, reduce faculty requirements, and reduce costs

Delivering twice a year to allow access for all senior trainees within stage 3

For other regions with limited exposure to sick children, this curriculum-mapped course could help address training gaps and provide trainees with the requisite skills in caring for a critically unwell child.