Quality Assuring Simulation-based Training in the South London Simulation Network (SLSN): A Peer Review Process

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INTRODUCTION

• Simulation based training within the SLSN is diverse and variable.

• A simple QA tool and framework centred on peer observation has been devised to enable bringing together aspects of quality in design, delivery and cost-effectiveness.

• Peer observation is suggested to enhance practice by engaging peers in reflective, analytical and constructive discussion [1] and has been used in a variety of settings in healthcare to provide feedback to individuals or groups [2-4].
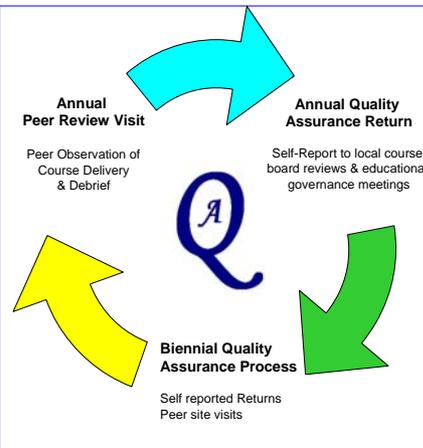
OBJECTIVE

To design and implement a quality assurance tool and framework within the South London Simulation Network in order to compare:

a) Operational and governance functions.

b) Design and delivery of courses against standards defined as best practice.

c) To exchange good practice, ideas and processes.

METHODS

• The literature review revealed a paucity of quality assurance in relation to simulation training.

• There was a body of literature outlining the concept of "quality".

• A number of key texts and themes were identified covering 3 main areas:

1) Governance of centres and programmes.

2) Course design – scenarios, evaluation, training of standardised patients and equipment maintenance.

3) Staff – standards for technicians and trainers, staff appraisal and development.

Figure 1: The QA Process SLSN

Annual Peer Review Visit
Peer Observation of Course Delivery & Debrief

Annual Quality Assurance Return
Self-Report to local course board reviews & educational governance meetings

Biennial Quality Assurance Process
Self reported Returns
Peer site visits

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METHODS

Figure 2: SLSN QA Process and Methodology

Stage One: Literature Review **(Complete)**

• Undertaken to explore what the simulation community believe is quality in simulation-based training and identify any existing quality assurance mechanisms

Stage Two: Development of QA Tool and Framework **(Complete)**

• Themes and standards from the literature search were collated and threaded together to guide the design of the peer review tool and QA framework

Stage Three: Phase One – Pilot QA Tool through Peer Review process **(Complete)**

• A focus group consensus validated the tool which was then piloted.
• Peer reviewers from the network were invited to be involved in the process and QA individual courses via peer review visits.

Stage Three: Phase Two – Review of QA Tool and biennial phase in framework AND integrate learning and tool into broader course delivery and governance throughout SLSN **(Almost complete)**

• QA reports reviewed for common themes.
• Feedback collated regarding the QA tool and framework from the peer reviewers
• All fed back to the SLSN at the QA subgroup meeting
• Peer review reports reviewed at annual course review board meetings for individual courses.

Stage Four: Biennial Reviews **(Future)**

Table 1: SLSN QA Process and Responsibilities

Stage	Person(s) responsible & areas
Annual QA Review	*Peer Site Visit: x1 per course*
Annual QA return	*Course Leads: Self Report x1 per course & course board reviews*
Biennial Quality Assurance Report:	*Centre Director: collates summary of Self-Reports and Peer Site Visits*

RESULTS

• 8 peer reviewers recruited from 5 simulation centres
• 20 courses peer reviewed (2 retrospectively)
• All courses achieving majority of recommended quality standards

Course Administration and Pre-reading:	Inaccurate pre-course emails, consider NTS pre-reading, under- or overbooking and DNA rates
Learning Objectives:	For Courses - need to be added or made more explicit
	For Scenarios – need to be added or made more explicit
Participants:	Increase interprofessional capacity and more multidisciplinary involvement
Psychological Safety:	More pre-briefing of participants to make expectations more explicit
Debriefs:	More explanation of role of debrief and model/structure used, lack of debrief structure, clearer signposting within debrief, lack of application stage, more focus on specific NTS
Faculty:	Prebrief and preparation, developing faculty's debriefing skills (variable debrief quality), supporting novice debriefers

Table 2: Common themes arising from peer review visits

Feedback at the QA Sub-group Meeting:

• Very positive experience for centres and peer reviewers
• Feedback highly valuable for course leads
• QA framework fit for purpose and achievable if SLSN support
• QA Tool fit for purpose but an online version would enhance user friendliness
• Future peer reviewer training by webinar and online guide

CONCLUSION

• We have used the principle of peer observation as the central component of our QA process.

• The QA tool is designed to be simple and effective, easily usable by centres to quickly identify course standards of course design, and, to quality assure their own courses and improve course delivery.

• A network-wide QA process requires significant manpower and resources but is an extremely valuable tool for centre, course and individual faculty development.

• We now aim to embed this process within the SLSN to encourage a culture of transparency and collaboration.