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Analyzing the Efficiency of Endovascular Training Simulations

NEW YORK: James R. Duncan, MD, PhD, Assistant Professor of Radiology and of Surgery, Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine. (St. Louis, MO), explored the challenges associated with finding both effective and affordable simulations to improve training for endovascular surgeons today at the 33rd annual VEITHsymposium™.

Duncan said, “The advantage of using simulation-based training is straightforward: they permit inexperienced and experienced doctors to practice delicate and complex procedures in an easily observed and reproducible setting without risking patient health. While the costs of simulation-based training can be high, the costs of poor or inefficient training are much higher.”

Duncan reported that typically, analyses of simulated endovascular procedures have focused on using parameters such as procedure time or error rates to assess performance. Dr. Duncan and his colleague, Dr. Craig Glaiberman, Assistant Professor of Radiology, Mallinckrodt Institute of Radiology at Washington University in St. Louis School of Medicine. (St. Louis, MO) estimate efficiency by tracking the cost of resources (time, contrast, catheters and other devices) used during the simulation. In addition, one can also assess the costs of training by tracking instructor time, course fees, teaching supplies, etc.

The analytic tools Drs. Duncan and Glaiberman have developed will permit measurement of how different training methods impact doctors’ learning curve. As he noted, “Inefficient training methods will produce little cost savings or require large training investments to produce a moderate skill gains. Efficient training methods will

produce large gains with small investments in training.”

To illustrate this point, Duncan cited a recent study of CPR training methods, which found that the standard training was expensive but only marginally effective. When medical students were provided with a half-hour video for self-study instead of the typical 4-hour instructor-led course, it was found that the cheaper, faster method actually produced superior skills.

According to Dr. Duncan, “A common saying is that if you cannot measure something, you cannot improve it. With that in mind, it is obvious that we need reliable, accurate and low cost methods of assessing performance during medical procedures.”

“The underlying fact is that training is expensive and medical training is extraordinarily expensive. We look forward to measuring the impact that the recently developed simulators will have on endovascular training,” Dr. Duncan concluded.

About VEITHsymposium™: Now entering its fourth decade, VEITHsymposium™ provides vascular surgeons, interventional radiologists, interventional cardiologists and other vascular specialists with a unique and exciting format to learn the most current information about what is new and important in the treatment of vascular disease. The 5-day event features 300 rapid-fire presentations from the world's most renowned vascular specialists with emphasis on the latest advances, changing concepts in diagnosis and management, pressing controversies and new techniques.

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