Characterizing the debriefer: a mixed-methods, sequential-explanatory study of debriefing
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Introduction
Debriefing is the single most important factor for effective learning in simulation.1 There is a wide range of options for debriefing training, but little is known about the relative merit of these options and some debriefers may have no specific training at all. Similarly little is known about the contribution that the duration and nature of debriefing experience makes to the quality of debriefs delivered. We know that self-assessment is problematic in the clinical domain2 but it is unclear if this applies to debriefing also. As we know the debrief is the most crucial aspect of the simulation, if we can define those characteristics of an ideal debriefer, we can guide faculty development and move towards maximizing effectiveness of simulation based medical education. We hypothesize that there will be at best a moderate correlation between expert assessment and both learner-assessment and self-assessment.

Methods
In this international multicentre study, subjects are videoed debriefing standardized anesthesia crisis simulations. We are comparing debriefing performance scores awarded by expert raters to a debriefer’s self-assessments using the Debriefing Assessment for Simulation in Healthcare (DASH) tool (figure 2). Secondly, we are comparing the scores awarded by the learners to the expert assessments in each case. Thirdly we are looking for correlations between the debriefer’s training and experience in debriefing and their three debrief scores. Finally, where there are deficits or exemplars in debriefing performance, we will describe using qualitative methods the factors that contribute to low-scoring and high-scoring debriefs. See figure 1.

Figure 1. Study Procedure. The 1st phase (quantitative) informs the 2nd Phase (qualitative) – purposive sampling

Figure 2. The Debriefing Assessment for Simulation in Healthcare – 3 versions for 3 assessments of each debrief

Data collection and analysis
In this work in progress we are videoing and analyzing 200 debriefs performed by at least 30 debriefers over 12 locations on two continents which is the largest prospective observational study of simulation debriefing. We will use multiple linear regression to quantify the relationship between the three assessments of debriefing. Covariates here will be the debriefer’s previous training and experience in debriefing. The qualitative component will involve selecting a sample of high and low-scoring debriefs, reviewing the videos with debriefers then structured interviews, transcription, coding and thematic analysis.

Implications
Future evolution of faculty development programs may be improved by considering data on characteristics of optimum debriefers. Examining a debriefer’s insight into their debriefing performance and the validity of learner feedback will further inform the ways in which simulation programs and faculty development programs are evaluated. Furthermore, debriefing the debriefers with their videos and scores engenders self-reflection and promotes improvement amongst study subjects.

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References

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