

Implementation Results of a Novel Comprehensive Mental Skills Curriculum during Simulator Training

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Abstract

Introduction

Mental skills training refers to the implementation of cognitive performance-enhancing strategies to promote optimal performance. We aimed to develop a surgery-specific mental skills curriculum (MSC) and obtain initial evidence of efficacy.

Methods

The developed MSC consisted of eight proven performance-enhancing modules. Its efficacy was assessed during laparoscopic simulator-based practice by novices using validated instruments of mental skills, workload, and stress, in addition to a skill transfer test to a porcine model. A paired t-test was used to analyze the data.

Results

Nine surgical novices completed the curriculum. Compared with baseline assessment participants improved significantly their laparoscopic performance and mental skills after completion of the MSC. All participants completed the task in the porcine model without an appreciable change in their perceived stress. During the skill transfer test, eight participants were observed using mental skills taught in the MSC.

Conclusions

A surgery-specific simulator-based mental skills curriculum was developed and its efficacy in improving mental skills and surgical performance was supported during a surgical skill transfer test.

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