Are You Prepared for a Disaster? Using Simulation for Pediatric Disaster Triage Education

Disasters are high-stakes, low-frequency events that may potentially overwhelm healthcare resources. Accurate and effective triage of disaster victims helps to ensure that available resources are efficiently allocated to a large number of patients with a range of immediate needs. Disaster triage is a crucial tool, yet existing education and training on this topic is limited. Simulation educational modalities are interactive and can be effective tools for disaster education. Simulation bridges the gap between classroom learning and real life experience. It creates a safe learning environment that allows for cycles of facilitated feedback and deliberate practice with reflection on performance. Simulation helps individual learners and teams acquire disaster-specific knowledge and skills that focus on injury and illness, policies and activation protocols, resource utilization and psychosocial issues.

This immersive, hands-on workshop will begin with an overview of pediatric disaster triage and disaster training principles. This will include a discussion about triage algorithms, resource utilization, policies and procedures, as well as unique aspects of care of children involved in a disaster. Participants will then experience three different types of simulation modalities that may be used for disaster triage education:

1. Participants will run through a tabletop simulation exercise to highlight disaster planning and logistics of a response
2. Video game-based simulation will be used to review and apply jumpSTART/START and mass casualty triage algorithms;
3. Live simulation will be used to provide an overview of triage and resource utilization.

Workshop leaders will facilitate a discussion about nuances of each type of simulation, potential real life applications and integrated training strategies. Participants will discuss skill retention, just-in-time training and team dynamics. Participants will work in small groups, then share their ideas and experiences in teaching and practicing disaster exercises. Workshop leaders and participants will also review how these three simulation modalities may apply to other educational endeavors.