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# Expert Practice of Video-Assisted Debriefing: An Australian Qualitative Study

Kristian Krogh, Cand Med<sup>a,\*</sup>, Margaret Bearman, PhD<sup>b</sup>, Debra Nestel, PhD<sup>c</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Centre for Medical Education, Aarhus University, Denmark

<sup>b</sup>Associate Professor, HealthPEER, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Australia

<sup>c</sup>Professor, School of Rural Health, HealthPEER, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Australia

## KEYWORDS

video-assisted  
debriefing;  
VAD;  
video review;  
simulation;  
expert practice

## Abstract

**Background:** Debriefing is a significant component of simulation-based education. Video-assisted debriefing (VAD) refers to the use of audiovisual capture and review to support participants' learning after simulations. With technological advances, VAD is increasingly accessible. However, there are challenges associated with optimal use. We sought expert debriefers' views on their practices of VAD.

**Method:** Expert debriefers who work with manikin-based immersive simulation were peer nominated by simulation education experts. Twenty-four debriefers participated in semistructured interviews. VAD inductively emerged as a significant category from transcripts. All extracts pertaining to VAD were extracted and analyzed using thematic and content analysis.

**Results:** Thematic analysis explored (a) how and when expert debriefers use video in debriefing, (b) impact of audiovisual systems, (c) educational approaches to VAD, and (d) debriefers balancing benefits and challenges using VAD.

**Conclusions:** Overall, this study indicates that expert debriefers share a belief that video is an adjunct to debriefing. VAD use is variable from almost always to very rarely used. Analysis suggests that optimal use of VAD in a single debrief is at most a few short clips, with learners oriented to the educational purpose of the particular extracts.

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Debriefing is a significant component of simulation-based education (SBE), as debriefing provides learners with the opportunity to discuss and reflect on their experiences,

The work is attributed to the School of Rural Health, HealthPEER, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Monash University, Australia.

\* Corresponding author: [kk@medu.au.dk](mailto:kk@medu.au.dk) (K. Krogh).

usually under the guidance of an experienced facilitator. Debriefing techniques are now extensively reported in the simulation literature as one of the most important elements of learning through simulation (Fanning & Gaba, 2007; Raemer et al., 2011). There are many variations on how to conduct debriefings, with a range of approaches reported in the health professions literature (Dufrene & Young, 2013; Levett-

Jones & Lapkin, 2013; Motola, Devine, Chung, Sullivan, & Issenberg, 2013). Dreifuerst proposes that to be effective, debriefing has to have several components: reflection, emotion, reception, and, integration and assimilation (Dreifuerst, 2012). There are common themes to these approaches that

### Key Points

- Expert debriefers consider VAD an adjunct to facilitation of the debriefing.
- VAD is a powerful tool to be used with caution.
- Expert debriefers adapted the use VAD in their practices according to given contexts to make VAD learner centered.

typically involve a period of emotional expression, clarification of what happened during the simulation, a reflective discussion, and take home messages. Debriefing can be considered as a discrete phase within the simulation activity (Figure; Jolly, Nestel, & Sprick, 2012). All six SBE phases are typically important in creating an effective educational experience, and each impacts on the other. In this exploration of video-assisted debriefing (VAD),

it is important to recognize that debriefing occurs in one phase, debriefing *practice* is not a stand-alone event, and it necessarily links to the all other phases of the simulation. For example, preparing for the debriefing must occur earlier than the actual debriefing itself. Throughout the article, we refer to “learners” as the participants in simulations—undergraduate students or qualified clinicians and from any health profession.

VAD refers to the use of audiovisual capture and review to support learning; learners view and listen to their own performance to aid identification of how they can improve their knowledge, skills, and attitudes. It is an increasingly common component of debriefing (Dismukes, Gaba, & Howard, 2006; Motola et al., 2013; Ostergaard, Dieckmann, & Lippert, 2011). Advances in technologies have facilitated the audiovisual capture of performance. Audiovisual capture in simulations requires at its most basic, little more than a smart phone or a camcorder. At its most complex, in simulation centers with complex manikin with digital outputs, multiple pan-tilt-zoom cameras and microphones record audio and picture to a hard drive through a converter, merging manikin, and monitor information with synchronized audio and picture. Setting up a complex audiovisual system requires a degree of technical expertise, as choices must be made regarding cameras, microphones, software for capture and editing, storage, accessibility of recording, and data security. This article does not focus on any particular kind of technology as this is purpose and context dependent. However, we note that, as with all audiovisual recordings, learners need to be informed of the intended capture, how it will be used, and must consent for any storage arrangement.

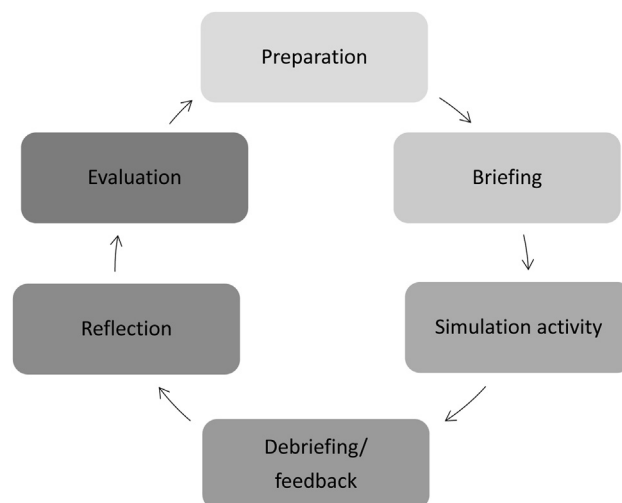
The benefits of VAD in the clinical environment as both an audit tool and a tool for clinical debrief is well documented (Makary, 2013). In health care simulation, the evidence of

enhanced learning when using VAD is mixed. Recent reviews indicate that there is confirming and disconfirming evidence of the benefit of VAD, and further studies are required (Cheng et al., 2014; Dufrene & Young, 2013; Levett-Jones & Lapkin, 2013). However, commentators generally agree that there is a place for the use of VAD (Boet et al., 2011; Byrne et al., 2002; Chronister & Brown, 2012; Grant, Moss, Epps, & Watts, 2010; Savoldelli et al., 2006; Sawyer et al., 2012; Welke et al., 2009). Fanning and Gaba wrote, “... video playback may be useful for adding perspective to a simulation, to allow learners to see how they performed rather than how they thought they performed, and to help reduce hindsight bias in assessment of the scenario” (Fanning & Gaba, 2007, p. 122). Most studies on VAD lack a description on how video segments were chosen and how many segments were used, if the entire simulated scenario was not reviewed (Boet et al., 2011; Byrne et al., 2002; Chronister & Brown, 2012; Grant et al., 2010; Savoldelli et al., 2006; Sawyer et al., 2012; Welke et al., 2009). As with many educational techniques, it may not be VAD as method in itself that spurs learning but how it is applied. To frame both future educational practice and research, it is critical to understand how VAD is currently used to support learning. One way of understanding VAD use is to explore expert practice across a broad spectrum of simulation educators. This article has an exploratory purpose and aims to qualitatively describe the use of VAD as reported by expert simulation educators across Australia.

## Methods

### Focus of This Study

This investigation of expert VAD practices is drawn from a larger study exploring aspects of expert debriefing practice driven by the research question: “What are the debriefing practices of experts in debriefing in manikin-based



**Figure** The six phases related to the simulation activity.

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