

In Reply

To the Editor,

Thank you indeed for your important comments concerning our article “Impact of simulator-based training on acquisition of transthoracic echocardiography skills in medical students”.^[1]

We fully agree that well-trained, experienced patients as educators can bridge the gap between examining simulators and patients with cardiac disease, especially when teaching goals in patient encounters include “telling their story”, stimulating reflection, sharing perspectives or problem-solving, as suggested by Cheng *et al.*^[2] Reviews have been published highlighting not only the benefits, but

also the challenges of patient educators involved in clinical teaching.^[3] One central issue of involving patient educators in medical education is the principle that “what is taught should be what the patient educators want students to learn, in the way they want to teach it, and at the location of their choosing”.^[4]

In our study, the students involved in the case-control study were students with no prior experience in echocardiography techniques, with the aim of comparing simulator-based TTE teaching with live-human-model-teaching to elucidate which teaching method accomplishes the learning goal

of achieving maximum points in all FATE examination standard views. We feel that high accomplishment in standard echocardiography examination techniques should be prerequisite before exposing students to patient educators or patients with chronic heart disease. As a further measure, it would indeed be interesting to proceed in a comparative study focusing on the examination of patient educators as opposed to hybrid simulation (combining simulated patients without chronic heart disease with simulators in one and the same teaching session) to focus on communicative interaction and reflection with the patient.

We also fully agree that repetitive practice is necessary for students to maximize the learning experience in TTE. This would also be another interesting study to elucidate the impact of repetitive practice on TTE skills in students.

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Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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