

ORIGINAL RESEARCH

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DEVELOPING CAPABILITIES FOR THE CARE SECTOR USING SIMULATION-BASED EDUCATION

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Introduction: The social care workforce must evolve to meet the changing needs of an ageing population, including increasing demand and delivery of homecare. Current

training for home care workers is often theory-based, with homecare workers often feeling underconfident and lacking skills in some areas. Although simulation is widely used in healthcare for skill enhancement, it is underutilised in homecare training. This project aimed to explore the use of simulation-based education to upskill homecare workers to identify risks they may encounter in a client's home.

Methods: This study was a pre-post mixed-methods study. Two high-fidelity simulations were undertaken, one for home care workers and another for home care managers. The simulation sessions were conducted in an activity of daily living suite. Both simulations were pre-briefed, recorded and debriefed using the STOP 5 hot debrief model [1]. Pre- and post-questionnaires included demographics, the 10-item General Self-Efficacy Scale, a bespoke measure on confidence

with caring and communicating with clients, and the Student Satisfaction and Self-Confidence in Learning questionnaire [2]. Descriptive statistics were undertaken on pre and post surveys, the debrief was transcribed verbatim and analysed using thematic analysis alongside open-text comments from the questionnaires [3].

Results: 12 carers and 8 care managers took part in the simulation sessions. Four themes were developed across the quantitative and qualitative findings. Two themes focused on the use of simulation within home care: “Is Aggie okay?” – Risk Identification and client care, and “We’re in for it here” – Showcasing the challenges and difficulties of care. The other two themes focused on participants’ views on simulation as a training method: “Understanding the proper role of a carer” – Benefits of simulation in training, and “Obviously, we’re in a role play situation” – Challenges in engaging in simulation.

Discussion: Simulation helped promote client-centered thinking, critical reflection, and peer discussion. It was seen as a useful complement to theoretical training, especially in preparing new carers. However, challenges such as suspension of disbelief, stress, and organisational barriers impacted engagement. To enhance effectiveness and minimise learner anxiety, the study highlights the importance of realistic scenarios, pre-briefing, and debriefing to ensure psychological safety and skill transfer.

Ethics Statement: As the submitting author, I can confirm that all relevant ethical standards of research and dissemination have been met. Additionally, I can confirm that the necessary ethical approval has been obtained, where applicable.

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