Simulated learning environments—a behind-the-scenes look at managing maintenance for simulation equipment across Western Australia

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Background: Western Australia is geographically challenged and is the largest state, covering over 2.5 million square kilometres. Simulated learning environments (SLEs) are increasingly being utilised to deliver multidisciplinary clinical training in rural and remote locations. SLE equipment is becoming more sophisticated; it is therefore imperative that this equipment is maintained so that team-based clinical training can occur.

Western Australia has been successful in securing Health Workforce Australia (HWA) funding under the Simulated Learning Environment Program. HWA is providing support to tackle insufficient clinical placements.

Method: WA Health established the Clinical Simulation Support Unit in January 2012 to coordinate simulation learning across all sectors. WA Health has recently invested in over $5 million in capital simulation equipment. An identified issue for WA Health was how to look after its simulation equipment, particularly when it is utilised in many rural and remote regions. As part of its recurrent business plan, the CSSU has been successful in securing funds to establish a centralised maintenance unit (CMU) to provide maintenance for its simulation equipment.

This poster presentation will draw on the experience of WA Health and how we tackled the problem of maintaining equipment across the state by:

- the establishment of a registry of SLE equipment for WA Health
- logistics for breakdown cover and servicing for equipment in remote locations
- preventative maintenance protocols and check lists
- how the CMU drives quality and safety for clinical training
- enhanced cross-sector relationships and collaboration.
Relevance: Many jurisdictions face similar geographical challenges in delivering clinical training for rural clinicians. The WA model could be applied to other states and territories to ensure SLE equipment remains operational for clinicians in remote locations.

Conclusions: Utilising a central hub for maintenance is an efficient and cost-effective solution for maintaining SLE equipment across WA Health.