



Pilot point-of care-ultrasound physician assistant curriculum: an educational adjunct to the traditional anatomy course



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Introduction

Efforts to incorporate point-of-care-ultrasound (POCUS) into formal medical education curricula have grown in parallel with its widespread integration across medical specialties and practice settings. Although POCUS has been proven a feasible and beneficial educational tool within the didactic and clinical phases of the four-year medical school setting, little data exists for non-physician graduate medical learners such as physician assistant (PA) students. In addition to the usual barriers to ultrasound curriculum integration, the condensed nature of PA program curriculum poses an added challenge.

Pilot Objectives

- 1) Determine feasibility of **development** and **integration** of POCUS as an educational adjunct for PA learners
- 2) Determine PA learner **perspectives**

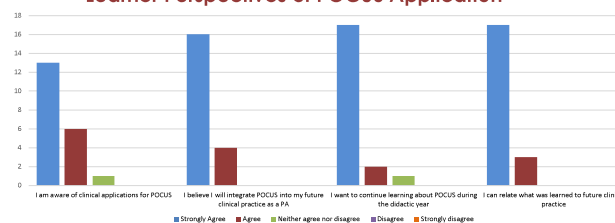
Results

All **didactic phase students (n=20)** attended all four sessions and completed the survey.

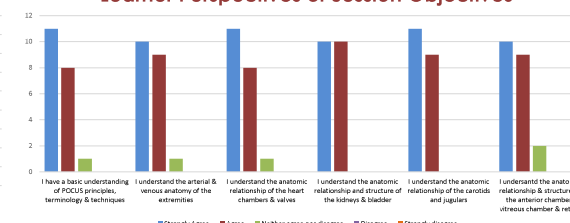
Most learners agreed or strongly agreed that they **want to continue learning about POCUS during the didactic year** (mean=4.8)

Most learners agreed or strongly agreed that **session objectives were met, augmenting knowledge of anatomy** (mean=4.5)

Learner Perspectives of POCUS Application



Learner Perspectives of Session Objectives

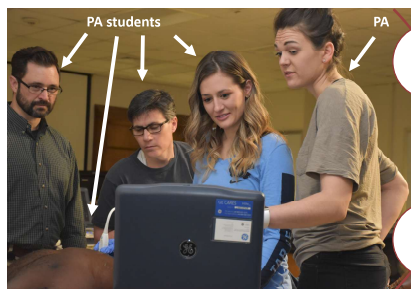
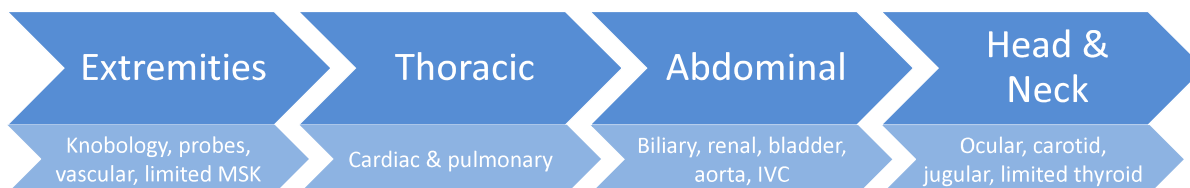


Methods

All **twenty didactic phase students** were offered a series of POCUS sessions to augment the **Human Gross Anatomy** lecture & cadaver lab course.

Sessions occurred throughout the **first semester of the didactic year** (Spring 2017).

POCUS sessions **corresponded to each of the four established course units**, and included:



45-minute session length

Faculty instruction & supervised scanning time

5:2:1
(learner : machine : faculty)

At the conclusion of the semester, anonymized electronic surveys were distributed to all twenty students.

Surveys contained ten items, each item assessing learner perspectives on a five-point Likert scale.

Conclusion

Both pilot objectives were met:

- 1) POCUS can efficiently and effectively be **developed** and **integrated** into existing physician assistant didactic curriculum as an educational adjunct to a traditional anatomy course.
- 2) Physician assistant learner **perspectives** regarding integration of POCUS into an already condensed curriculum are generally positive.

Future goals address limitations to this pilot study:

- 1) **Increase sample size:** provide anatomy POCUS sessions to future cohorts.
- 2) **Determine educational impact:** develop and deploy formal assessment components.
- 3) **Increase faculty to student ratio:** train the trainer experiences for PA faculty

Since this pilot, POCUS has been integrated elsewhere in the didactic curriculum, including patient assessment and fundamentals of surgery courses.

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