



Sharing the History and Methodology of ASPE and the SP at IMSH

In 2013, the Association of Standardized/Simulated patient Educators celebrated the 50th anniversary of the first publication about the simulated patient. Many 2014 IMSH attendees may remember the portion of the Stephen Abrahamsom video describing his work with Howard Barrows, the creator of the simulated patient. While teaching medical students, Dr. Barrows, a neurologist, discovered that a lay person could be trained to simulate illness and give feedback to medical students about their history taking and communication skills. He ultimately called this person a simulated patient and defined it as “a person who has been carefully coached to simulate an actual patient so accurately that the simulation cannot be detected by a skilled clinician. In performing the simulation, the SP presents the gestalt of the patient being simulated; not just the history, but the body language, the physical findings, and the emotional and personality characteristics as well.”

Gradually, use of simulated patients began to grow in medical education. Educators found that simulated patients offered not only a variety of teaching opportunities for students, but also opportunities for testing student performance. Out of this testing environment grew the term “standardized patient” or “SP.”

As simulated/standardized patient methodology grew, educators felt a need to develop an organization that could foster the professional development of the people who were creating and supporting this new methodology. Thus, in 2001, the Association of Standardized/Simulated Patients was formed.

ASPE is the international organization of simulation educators dedicated to:

- Promoting best practices in the application of SP methodology for education, assessment and research
- Fostering the dissemination of research and scholarship in the field of SP methodology
- Advancing the professional knowledge and skills of its members

Since 2001, our membership has grown along with the concept and breadth of standardized/simulated patient applications, and we have many reasons for celebration.

Giving New Meaning to the Term SP

Today, when people use the term SP, they mean a lot of things. The terms simulated patient and standardized patient are often used interchangeably. Sometimes people even use the term SP to refer to lay people who are playing roles other than patients.

Broadening our Scope

The concept of SPs has expanded into many fields, including dentistry, pharmacy, veterinary medicine, allied health professions, law, education, social work, and conflict resolution.

Expanding our Oeuvre

Manikins, task trainers, and other technologies have broadened the scope of SP scenarios, providing learners with greater opportunities for practice with integrating procedural, clinical, and communication skills.

Working with Simulation Partners

ASPE members very much value the connections and learning opportunities created by working with other simulation organizations. ASPE became an affiliate of SSH in 2011, and ASPE members have been active in its committees and projects, including SSH's Editorial Board, development of the CHSE and CHSOS, SSH Terminology and Concepts Task Force, Affiliations Committee, and SP SIG. We also have affiliations with INACSL, ASPIH, SESAM, and membership in the GNSH.

Formalizing Standards of Practice

ASPE is hard at work on formalizing the SP Educator Standards of Practice. This document will delineate professional standards within several domains, outlining the elements and core values within each. At the same time we are collaborating with INACSL to create a simulation standard for the SP. This work will be part of INACSL's ongoing "Standards of Practice: Simulation" series published in their journal.

Attending the 14th Annual Conference

The celebration continues at the 14th Annual ASPE Conference at the Denver Marriott City Center, Denver, Colorado, USA, June 13-17, 2015, where you can discover all of the latest SP research and educational practices. To see what is ahead in the next 50 years, join us.

www.aspeducators.org

