Examining the Experiences of Ultrasound Standardized Patients Involved in Medical Education

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Background

Ultrasound Standardized Patients (USPs) are an integral aspect of medical education and ultrasound training

- Real-Time Feedback
- Technical Skills
- Interpersonal Skills

USPs are often placed in **vulnerable conditions** as part of their role

Research Gap

Current literature & best practice standards for US training report on **training effectiveness** but do not explore the **impact of scanning** on USPs themselves

Methods & Goals

- **Quantitative survey**
- Distributed to USPs at southern California medical institutions
- Administered online through **REDCap**
- Assess factors contributing to protecting or compromising USP comfort levels

Inclusion Criteria

- 18+ years of age; English-speaking
- Previous participation as a standardized patient for an ultrasound-specific demonstration

Survey Foci

- Demographic information
- **Background** of USP work
- **USP comfort levels** while being scanned
- Nature of **communication**
- **Conduct** of the ultrasonographer
- **Overall sentiment** on work performed as a USP

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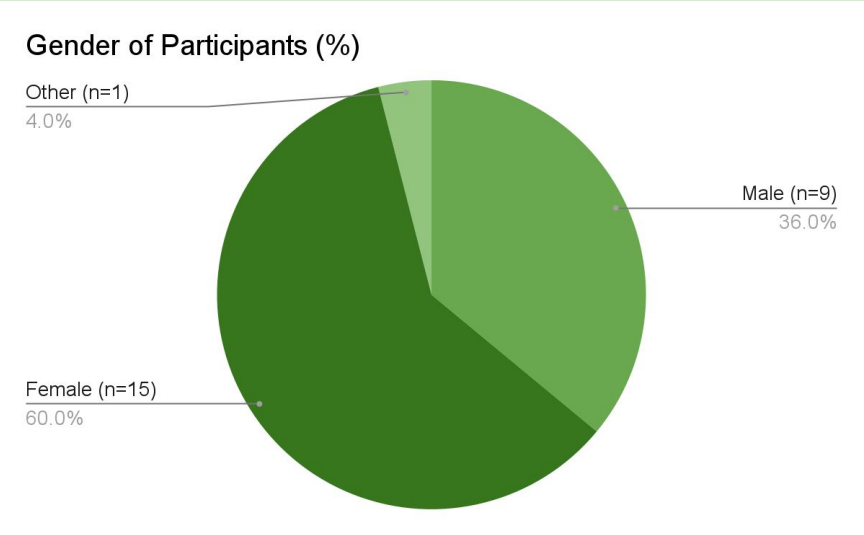
Results
(n=25)

Demographics

- Age Range: 18 - 66+
- 96% (n=24) of participants were not students of the participating institution.



USP Experience:

- Overall, experiences were overwhelmingly **positive**
- 100% (n = 25) of participants did not feel pressured to expose body parts that they were not comfortable with.
- 100% (n=25) of participants indicated that they would work as a USP again.

Types of Scans Performed:

Chest (19, 76.0%)	**Pelvis** (13, 52.0%)
Abdomen (19, 76.0%)	**Arms** (11, 44.0%)
Neck (16, 64.0%)	**Back** (9, 36.0%)
Legs (13, 52.0%)	**Genitalia** (6, 24.0%)

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Results
(n=25)

Chart 1: Participants indicated how often they signed a written consent form prior to the administration of the ultrasound demonstration while working as a USP.

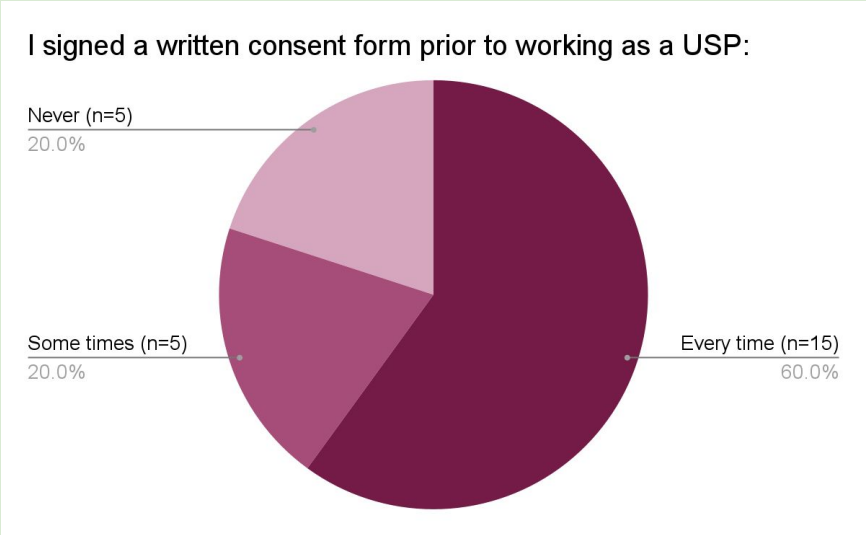
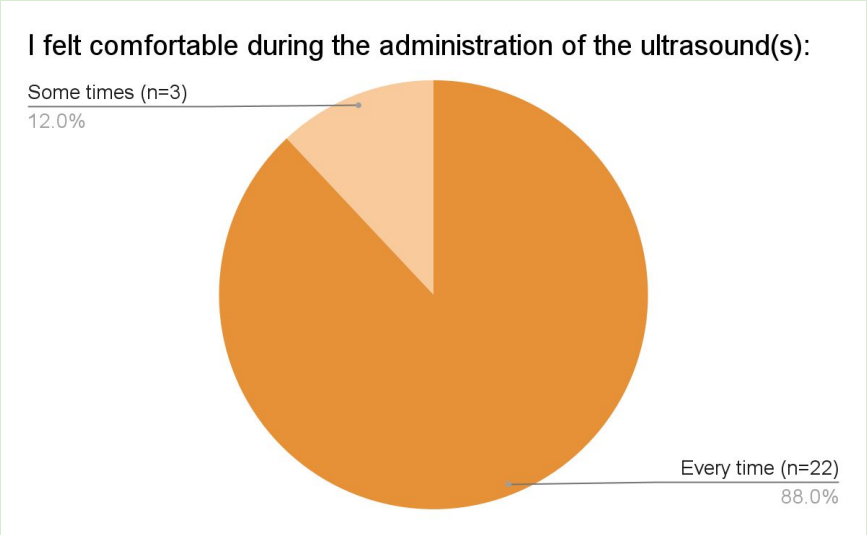


Chart 2: Participants indicated how often they felt comfortable during the administration of the ultrasound demonstration while working as a USP.



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Limitations & Discussion

- Limitations of this study include insufficient sample size and potential sampling bias due to a lower likelihood that USPs with negative experiences continued working with institutions that the surveys were sent to.
- Although findings showed overall positive USP experiences, comfort and professionalism were not universally reported, and written-consent practices varied → we recommend that institutions regularly assess USP experiences as part of quality improvement and incorporate identified concerns into curricula.

Ultimately, the goal is to improve overall standard of care for patients receiving ultrasound in clinical settings and promote a **conscious** and **respectful space** for patients placed in especially vulnerable circumstances.