Title: Examining the Experiences of Ultrasound Standardized Patients Involved in Medical Education

Objectives: Ultrasound standardized patients (USPs) are integral to ultrasound (US) education across multiple specialties. USP roles involve physical contact and bodily exposure, underscoring the importance of ensuring comfort and dignity. Prior research in US training protocols primarily focuses on learner outcomes, while USP experiences remain poorly described.[1-9] This study aims to describe USP-reported comfort, communication, consent practices, and professionalism during educational US examinations with the goal of strengthening US best practices.

Methods: We conducted an exploratory cross-sectional survey of English-speaking adults aged ≥18 years with USP experience. The survey was distributed to eligible USPs at participating medical schools in 2025 and was administered electronically using UCI REDCap. Scaled-response questions assessed comfort levels, consent practices, and ultrasonographer professionalism.

Results: 25 participants completed the survey. Most participants reported consistently receiving information about which body parts would be exposed (23 [92.0%]). 22 participants (88.0%) reported feeling comfortable during US examinations every time, and 23 (92.0%) felt comfortable expressing pain or discomfort. Although 10 (40%) did not sign a written consent form every time, none felt pressured to expose body parts they were not comfortable with (25 [100%]), and 23 (92.0%) felt comfortable requesting more coverage. 23 (92%) reported being treated with dignity and respect and experiencing professional conduct every time.

Conclusion: Respondents reported positive scanning experiences, including high comfort and respectful conduct, without pressure to expose unwanted body areas. However, comfort and professionalism were not universal, and written-consent practices varied. Standardized communication, consent and coverage procedures, and confidential feedback may help identify concerns. We recommend that institutions regularly assess USP experiences and incorporate concerns into curricula to strengthen educational and patient experiences.

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