

BACKGROUND

Paediatric and neonatal death is infrequent, but devastating. There are >900 deaths per year in infants alone in Australia (1). Both expected and unexpected death can have a profound impact on family as well as staff. Facilitating skill development for effective communication with the family in these difficult and stressful situations is essential. Previous research has shown that paediatric doctors feel ill-equipped to communicate with families in these situations (2-5).

The pilot program being assessed involves a novel integration of ALOBA-based (11) communication skills training relating to values-based goals of care using the Thinking Ahead Framework, followed by resuscitation scenarios informed by the completed goals of care forms. The scenarios were a 23 week gestation pregnancy in threatened preterm labour, and a 5 year old with life-limiting illness following recent prolonged ICU admission. The aim of this research project is to assess the impact and effectiveness of this recently created program around goals of care in paediatric patients.

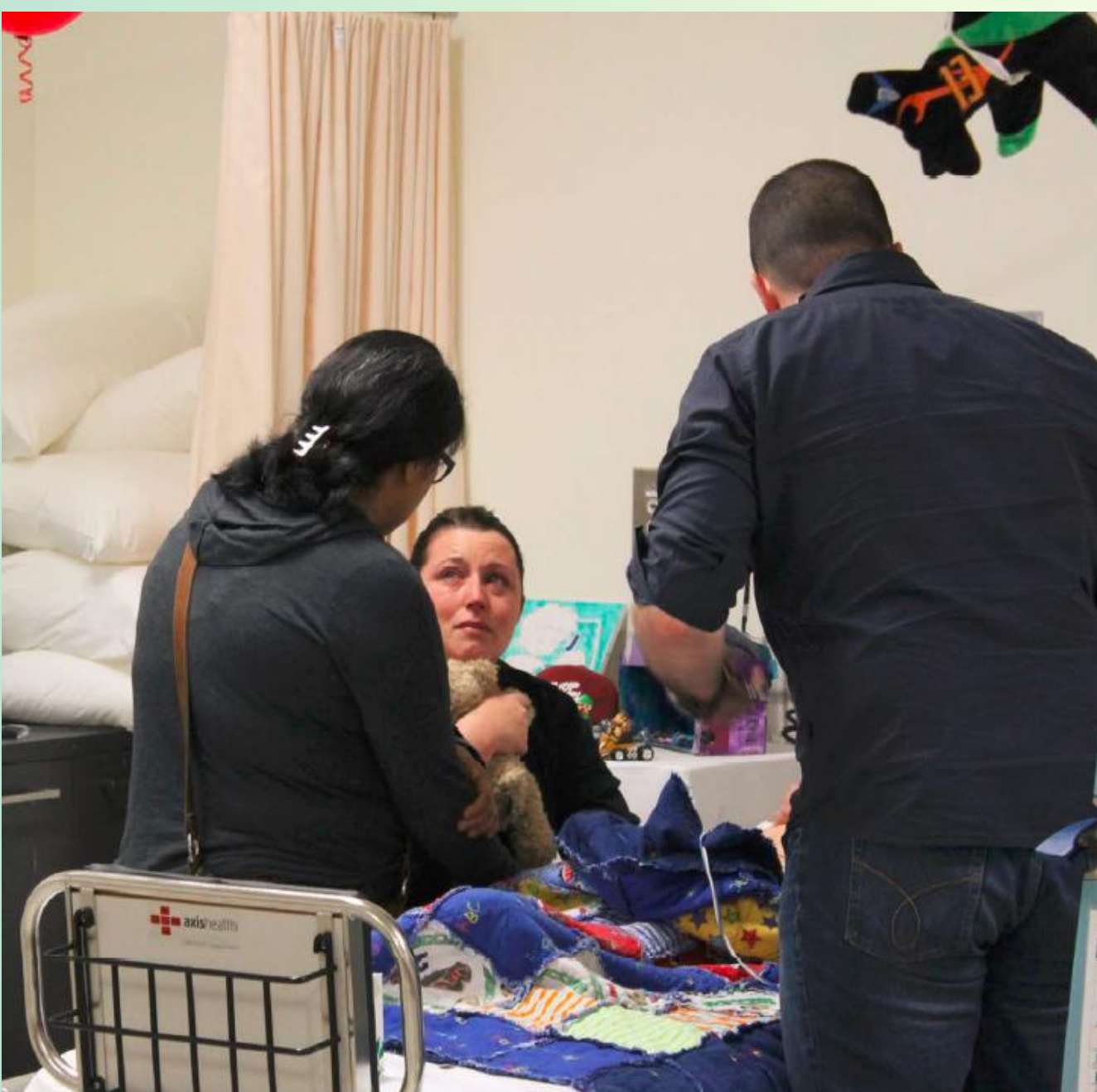


METHODS

Consultant paediatricians from a Level 2 regional hospital who took part in the Paed SimComm program completed a quality assurance survey immediately after the program. For research purposes, they were then asked to participate in a second survey twelve months later, reflecting on any translation from the program into clinical practice.

Data was recorded and analysed with RedCap™ software.

Ethics approval was obtained from Barwon Health: BH 17/198



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RESULTS

A total of 9 consultant paediatricians took part in both the communication and simulated resuscitation sessions. Consultant experience ranged from 1-5 years (33.3%) through to more than 15 years (22.2%). 88.9% of the paediatricians had only done ≤5 antenatal consultations at 23 or 24 weeks gestation.

The majority of the paediatricians (77.8%) had some previous experience in communication skills training, but the bulk of this was in medical school.

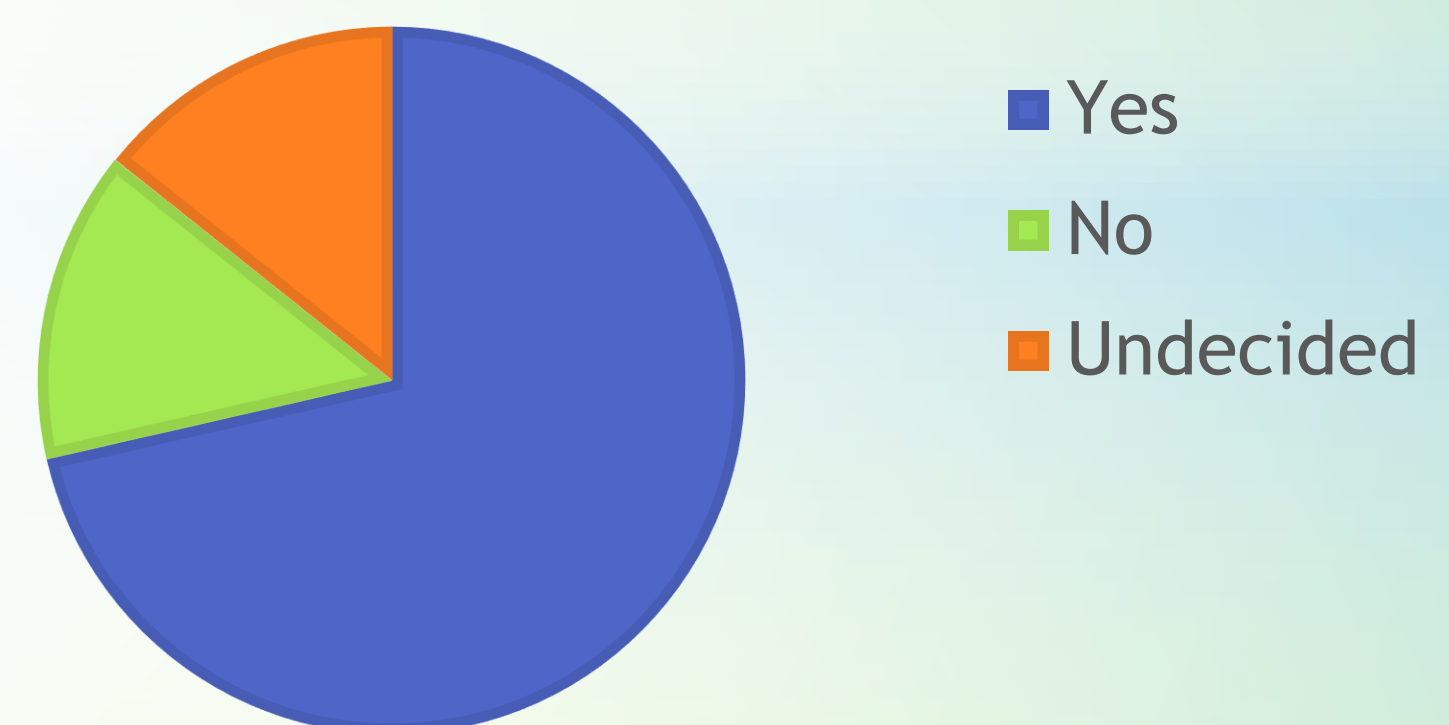
85.7% of the cohort found it easy to integrate the 'Thinking Ahead' framework into the resuscitation scenario with 72% reporting it enhanced their learning.

The outcome for both scenarios was death; **100% of the clinicians felt comfortable with this outcome.**

71.4% of the paediatricians felt that this simulation program was 'helpful' in preparing them for future clinical situations involving death in paediatrics.

On review 12 months later, 85.7% of the paediatricians felt the program enhanced their skill and confidence in antenatal discussions at 23 weeks gestation.

HAS THIS TRAINING ALTERED YOUR OUTLOOK OR APPROACH TO END OF LIFE MANAGEMENT OF REAL PATIENTS IN THE FUTURE?



'I was quite surprised at how powerful and real it felt. [The ability to] receive direct feedback is invaluable'

DISCUSSION

Combining communication training in advanced care planning and simulated resuscitation in the one program was acceptable and effective at a consultant level. The program was effective at teaching communication skills that then enhanced the consultant's skills in the simulated scenarios. Twelve month data found skills learned had translated to changes in clinical practice.



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