



# VITAL ANAESTHESIA SIMULATION TRAINING

## **VAST Wellbeing, VAST Facilitator Course Refresher, and VAST Course**

*Patty Livingston, Sandra Izquierdo, and Carolina Haylock-Loor  
Antigua, Guatemala, 13-17 June 2023*



## Executive summary

### **Situation**

VAST Wellbeing, a VAST Facilitator Course refresher, and a VAST Course were successfully offered in Antigua Guatemala. Most sessions were conducted in Spanish. The VAST Course was delivered entirely by Latin American facilitators.

### **Background**

At the request of Dr Carolina Haylock-Loor (Director of Programs for the World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists), the Vital Anaesthesia Simulation Training (VAST) Course was first introduced for Latin America in December 2022 in Honduras. The goals for the current training in Antigua, Guatemala were to consolidate simulation facilitation skills for the team previously trained in Honduras, to introduce VAST Wellbeing, and to support the Latin American facilitators in offering the VAST Course to a group of inter-professional Guatemalan healthcare providers. Since the training in Honduras, the VAST Facilitator Course and VAST Wellbeing materials have been mainly translated to Spanish, but additional review is still required. During the initial training in Honduras, the Latin American VAST team selected Guatemala as the next location for training, based on need. Dr Sandra Izquierdo, from Guatemala City who is affiliated with Universidad Rafael Landivar, kindly arranged the logistics for this current training.

### **Assessment**

The three programs were well received. There was a strong request for expansion of VAST in Latin America.

### **Recommendations**

1. There is a need to harmonize and confirm accuracy of all VAST materials that have been translated into Spanish.
2. Recognizing that resources are limited for supporting multiple VAST trainings in new locations, the Latin American VAST team suggested priority be given to courses in Central America, where there is the greatest need, before dissemination in South America.
3. Selection of course locations and participants for facilitator training should consider:
  - Sustainability
  - Options for ongoing facilitator practice to maintain skills
  - Sources of funding
  - Security
  - Existing resources
4. Consider a Latin American VAST Instructor Course (potentially led by Dr Adam Mossenson) in April 2024.

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## Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge financial support from the:

- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- World Federation of Societies of Anaesthesiologists (WFSA)
- Universidad Rafael Landivar
- Department of Anesthesia, Pain Management and Perioperative Medicine, Dalhousie University

## Attendees

<b>VAST Wellbeing and Facilitator Course Refresher</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Professional role</b>	<b>Course role</b>	<b>Workplace</b>
Sandra Izquierdo	Anesthesiologist	Course director	Guatemala
Carolina Haylock-Loor	Anesthesiologist	Instructor	Honduras
Patty Livingston	Anesthesiologist	Instructor	Canada
Fredy Ariza	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Colombia
Juan Carlos Duarte	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Venezuela
Geraldina Gross	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Honduras
Sandra Leal	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Bolivia/El Salvador
Cindy Montoya	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Honduras
Mauricio Vasco	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Colombia
Sara Whynot	Research facilitator	Simulation coordinator	Canada
Bryan Hernandez-Lopez	Social worker	Simulation coordinator	Honduras

<b>VAST Course</b>			
<b>Name</b>	<b>Professional role</b>	<b>Course role</b>	<b>Workplace</b>
Lesvia López	Nurse	Participant	Guatemala
Nancy Lopreto Suhul	Nurse	Participant	Guatemala
Susana del Carmen Mejia Alolara	Nurse	Participant	Guatemala
Carla Ramos	Nurse	Participant	Guatemala
Fernando Sanchez	Nurse	Participant	Guatemala
Iris Gamez Solano	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Guatemala
Sandra Kienhle Rodas	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Guatemala
Alejandra Quema Figueroa	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Guatemala
Aura Saenz Morales	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Guatemala
Maria Eugenia Veraz López	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Guatemala
Sergio Castillo Barrera	Anesthesiologist	Participant	Guatemala
Delfinita Martinez López	Anesthesia trainee	Participant	Guatemala
Maria de Lourdes Ramirez López	Anesthesia trainee	Participant	Guatemala
David Quijivix Rojas	Anesthesia trainee	Participant	Guatemala
Rene Velazquez Coxaj	Anesthesia trainee	Participant	Guatemala
Sophia Marroquín Moya	Obstetrics & Gyne	Participant	Guatemala
Maria Mercedes Robledo Méndez	Obstetrics & Gyne	Participant	Guatemala
Josué Díaz Segura	General surgeon	Participant	Guatemala
Carlos José Chavarria Gil	Traumatologist	Participant	Guatemala
Alejandra Mori	Medical education	Sim-coordinator trainee	Guatemala

## Venue and equipment

### Venue

The courses were held in the Hotel Soleil, on beautifully landscaped grounds in Antigua, Guatemala. The historic centre of Antigua, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, was a short walk from the hotel. The hotel arranged an outdoor cabana for VAST Wellbeing. The VAST Facilitator Course refresher and VAST Course were held in a large conference room that had plenty of space for a registration table, whole group discussions, simulation scenarios, debriefing, and coffee station. A second conference room was used for simulation scenarios and debriefing during the VAST Course. All catering was done by the Hotel Soleil with buffet meals for lunch.

### Equipment

Dr Sandra Izquierdo arranged that the Universidad Rafael Landivar would kindly donate the needed equipment, including stretchers and IV poles. The iPads and c-spine collars were loaned from the Canadian VAST team for the course but returned to Canada. There was no pediatric airway head, so an adult airway mannikin was substituted. The dolls for the non-technical skills hand-it-on game were used as neonates in the scenarios.

## **VAST Wellbeing**

VAST Wellbeing (June 13) is a one-day course designed to give inter-professional healthcare providers skills for recognizing and preventing burnout and for promoting personal and professional wellbeing. VAST Wellbeing has been offered in Canada, Rwanda, Tanzania, and India. Mixed methods research on this course is ongoing. The outdoor cabana was surrounded by trees and greenery but by the afternoon the space became quite hot. VAST Wellbeing was offered to the small group of facilitators who had trained in Honduras. The participants were clearly engaged, and feedback (see section on Course Evaluations) was overwhelmingly positive. There is a strong desire to see VAST Wellbeing offered more widely.

## **VAST Facilitator Course refresher**

The VAST Facilitator Course refresher (June 14) was intended to be an informal opportunity for the Latin American VAST team to apply skills learned in Honduras immediately before offering the VAST Course to Guatemalan participants. During the Honduras training, the team had identified the need for a cognitive aid for facilitation. Accordingly, the VAST facilitator cognitive aid was developed with a checklist on one side for scenario facilitation and on the reverse a checklist for debriefing. The team used this cognitive aid as they practiced six VAST scenarios including facilitation, debriefing, and meta-debriefing on the process of scenario facilitation. There was dramatic improvement over the day as the team became more familiar with the skills needed for simulation facilitation and debriefing. The process of rotating roles – co-facilitator, facilitator, and meta-debriefer – continued during the VAST Course so the facilitators could learn from both giving and receiving feedback from colleagues.

## **VAST Course**

The VAST Course (June 15-17) was offered in Spanish to 19 inter-professional Guatemalan participants. The opening welcome was delivered by Dean of the Medicine School Dr Edgar Lopez.

This was the first experience with simulation for many. While some were quite nervous initially, the participants quickly became comfortable with simulation and engaged fully.

The skills sessions (difficult airway management, neonatal resuscitation, and primary trauma survey) were all conducted as PowerPoint presentations with concurrent demonstration of skills using mannikins (difficult airway management, neonatal resuscitation) or simulated patients (primary trauma survey).

The VAST Course ran smoothly – like a well-oiled machine – led entirely by the Latin American VAST team. The progress in facilitation and debriefing over the course of the week was remarkable. Course evaluations (below) were strongly positive.

## Simulation coordinator training

Sara Whynot was joined by Bryan Hernandez-Lopez, who had trained in Honduras. Together, they trained Alejandra Mori, a general practitioner and medical educator who runs a simulation centre in Guatemala City. Dr Mori works at Universidad Rafael Landivar. The simulation coordination was impeccable. Although Dr Mori has not done the VAST Facilitator Course, her excellence with simulation was apparent so Dr Livingston encouraged and mentored Dr Mori in trying all the facilitation and debriefing roles. There is no doubt Dr Mori will be a key lead for the Latin American team. She is fluently bilingual.

## Social life

Two dinners were sponsored by pharmaceutical companies. Both were held at the Hotel Casa Santa Domingo in Antigua, the site of a centuries old monastery that was partially destroyed by a volcanic eruption and subsequently restored in the 1980s to function as a hotel. Words cannot describe this marvellous sprawling grounds full of gardens, statues, centuries old stonework, crypts, arches, cavernous rooms, and majesty.

On the final day, the facilitators gathered for a far more casual pizza dinner with lots of good cheer for a job well done.

## Course evaluations and informal feedback

### VAST Wellbeing

Participants all agreed that the training had been engaging and relevant and that they would be able to use the skills they learned after the course.

Specific key learning identified by participants included:

- Acknowledge, connect and be kind
- SMART goals x 2
- Living in the present, culture of gratitude, and SMART goals for changes in my workplace with the 80% rule
- Empathy, companionship, mental health
- Pay attention to the warning signs [of burnout] in co-workers; to internalize my mistakes is the first part of letting go; developing a valid proposal for workplace changes that contribute to a better organizational climate

Areas for improvement

- Move the program to a cooler place
- Language could be the biggest barrier; it is difficult to make generalizations but there could be cultural barriers even within the same region

Other comments about VAST Wellbeing:

- Very good; it helps you to have self-awareness

- Wellbeing is not only personal but organizational; simple, inexpensive changes can produce great results; preventing burnout is a task for everyone in the organization
- Wellbeing can be improved through exercises and activities to prepare for stressful situations; structured management can reduce burnout; implementing of wellbeing strategies can speed up those processes to improve the work environment; mindfulness is a valuable tool for building resilience
- Fantastic course and very practical
- I find it very appropriate in time and design
- Seek the possibility of disseminating it further to reach more people and a true culture of change
- The wellbeing of healthcare professionals is essential; we must be well as human beings to carry out our work; we must develop an organizational climate that supports wellbeing
- A four-hour version of the course could be useful in the hospitals
- This course can be very useful for medical residents and healthcare professionals. Congratulations!
- Congratulations and thank you very much!

### **VAST Facilitator Course refresher**

Formal feedback was not gathered for the VAST FC refresher, but participants mentioned that it had been essential. They had not had an opportunity for practice of VAST skills since December 2022 and expressed feeling “rusty”. There was clear progress over the day and by the time of the VAST Course, the team was functioning at a very high level.

### **VAST Course**

Participants agreed or strongly agreed the training was interesting and relevant. They considered that they would be able to apply new knowledge and skills to clinical practice.

Specific key learning identified by participants included:

- Teamworking x 10
- Establishing roles; appropriate role assignment
- Staying calm in a crisis x 3
- Application of the Surgical Safety Checklist x 4
- Algorithms and protocols are useful cognitive aids that can help reduce errors; using cognitive aids x 12
- Using a pre-anesthesia checklist
- We can all be leaders x 4
- Ask for in a timely manner x 2
- Declaring a crisis x 4
- Empathy; empathy with colleagues with work fatigue.
- Effective and assertive communication
- Systematic airway management
- Closed loop communication
- Non-technical skills

- Try to involve all knowledge by breaking down established barriers that limit improvement; respect hierarchy but do not let it impede my decision making; speaking up for patient safety
- Identify available resources
- Prioritization x 2
- Assessing capabilities of team members
- Recognizing urgency
- Decision making
- Maintain a global vision when managing emergencies

#### Areas for improvement

- One comment about timing of meals and breaks
- Although I appreciate the opportunity to learn more, I feel that some parts of today the focus was more on anesthesia staff, but I do enjoy being able to refresh facts and information from my medical school phase.

#### Other comments about the VAST Course:

- Excellent simulation, I learned a lot
- More training is necessary to improve the care in our hospitals
- It has been very enriching
- Excellent; excellent and very dynamic
- Thank you for your commitment to transmitting knowledge
- It has been very punctual, specific, with clear objectives and adequate methods to achieve them
- An extremely important experience for each area represented in the course
- I find that it creates a safe environment and provides an opportunity for learning and feedback
- I feel excited. I have learned a lot and will continue to learn.
- Very good course and I learned a lot, especially how to stay calm in moments of crisis
- Good experience
- I think it is good and orienting. It enriches the daily practice and the performance in anesthesia practice
- Very interesting by which I am learning new things and reinforcing my knowledge
- Very complete, practical with clear and feasible objectives
- An excellent and timely course
- Practical and close to reality
- Our performance is improving with the simulations we are doing. We have gained more confidence [Day 2]
- With each simulation we improve the use of protocols
- It has been enriching. The more we have simulated, the more important aspects of management and the importance of protocols we have discovered.
- As this course progressed, each of us participants gained confidence. We learned that in crisis situations we need to remain calm, ask for help, assign roles, work as a team and it is super important to use cognitive aids.
- The course was excellent. It exceeded my expectations, very grateful.
- May you return soon!



## Challenges and lessons learnt

Generally, the week ran smoothly. There were minor issues with the VAST Wellbeing outdoor venue getting too hot in the afternoon and some equipment (such as pediatric mannikins) not being available. The courses all ran punctually. Participants were on time and engaged. The hotel resources were excellent. The greatest challenge is language. Some translations, such as for VAST Wellbeing, were only completed immediately before the training and had not been fully checked and harmonized.

## Recommendations

1. There is a need to harmonize and confirm accuracy of all VAST materials that have been translated into Spanish.
2. Recognizing that resources are limited for supporting multiple VAST trainings in new locations, the Latin American VAST team suggested priority be given to courses in Central America, where there is the greatest need, before dissemination in South America.
3. Selection of course locations and participants for facilitator training should consider:
  - Sustainability
  - Options for ongoing facilitator practice to maintain skills
  - Sources of funding
  - Security
  - Existing resources
4. A one-day VAST sampler course is being arranged for July 2023 in Honduras
5. Dr Sandra Izquiero is planning a VAST Course for Guatemala City in November 2023
6. Consider a Latin American VAST Instructor Course (potentially led by Dr Adam Mossenson) in April 2024.

## Course Photos



Figure 1: VAST Wellbeing instructors and graduates

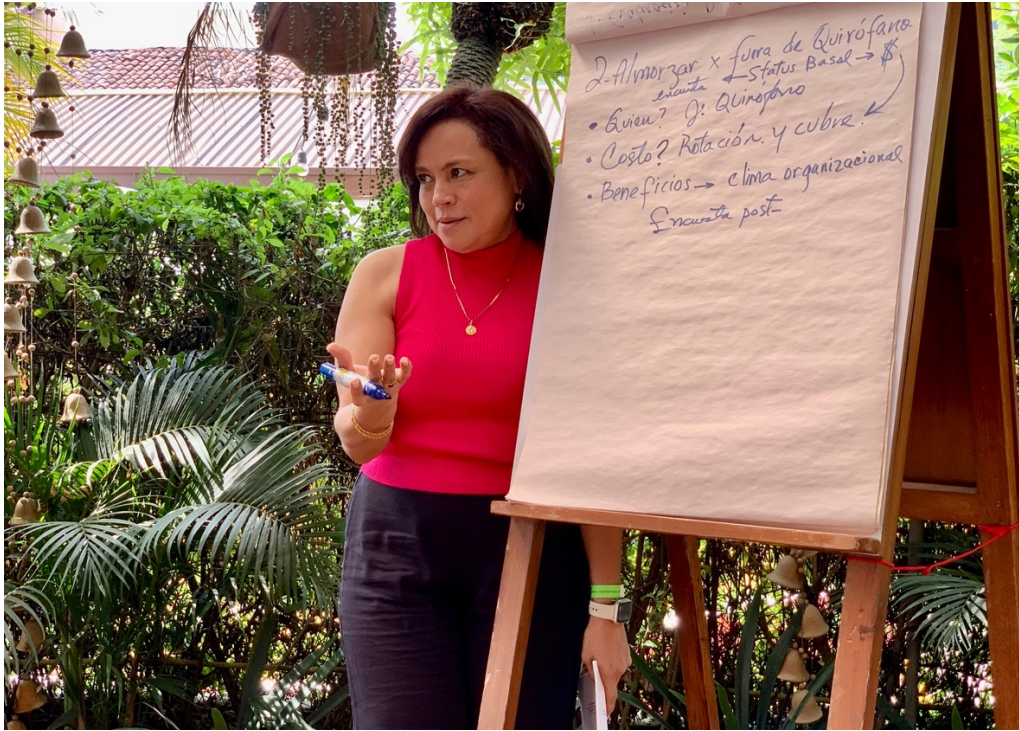
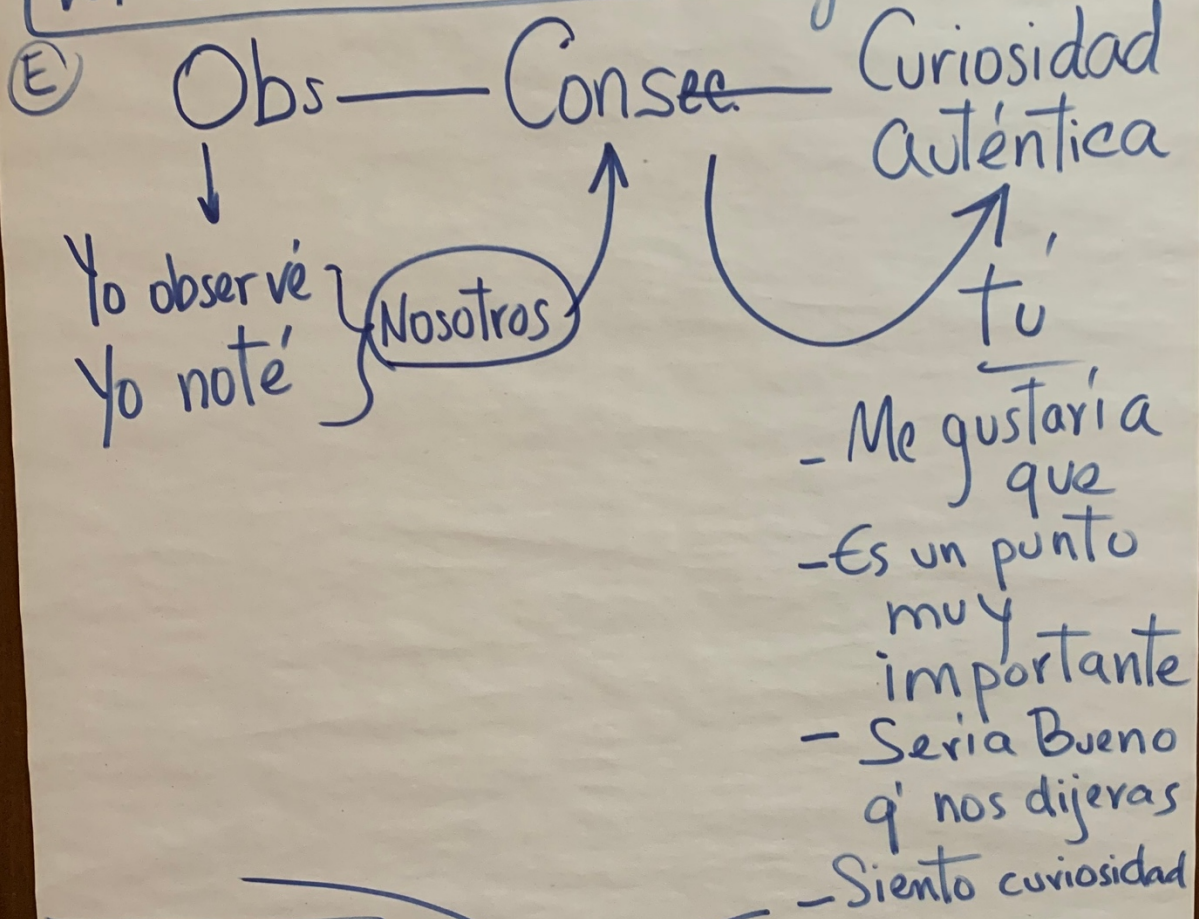


Figure 2: Dr Carolina Haylock-Loor facilitating at VAST Wellbeing



Figure 3: Sim coordinators are ready!

# ARGUMENTARE Indagar



EXPLORAR

Aplicar

abrimos (Expand)

cerrar (Aplicación)

Figure 4: Dr Carolina Haylock-Loor's explanation of advocacy in Spanish



Figure 5: the hand-it-on non-technical skills game



