

COVID-19 sim scenario

This is an enormously difficult time for global healthcare providers as we face the COVID-19 pandemic. While it will be challenging to respond effectively, we have some strengths to draw upon. We have efficient methods for information exchange and communication that will serve our global community well. We face a common cause and are invested in finding a common solution.

As you know, VAST promotes safe, systematic practice and effective team function. With this in mind, we offer some tools that may be useful to manage this crisis. It would be ideal if you could run simulation sessions to prepare your colleagues for safe management of COVID-19 suspected patients. Rehearsal through simulation can protect lives. A COVID-19 simulation scenario was developed and is posted [here](#) on the VAST website.

Our thoughts and aspirations are with all of you. Please be safe. You are vitally needed.



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Welcome Message

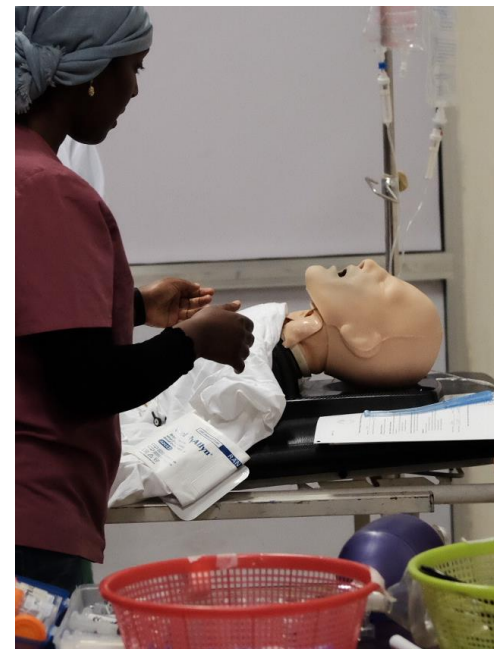
By: VAST Team

Welcome to the first edition of The VAST Bulletin, one of which we hope will be many. As the world comes together to work through these unprecedented times, we remain dedicated to continuing VAST programming when we are past the COVID-19 pandemic. For many of you who work in already strained healthcare systems, this situation may be overwhelming and immensely stressful. We look forward to the day when we can reunite with friends and colleagues in person and continue providing VAST courses globally.

This bulletin presents us with an opportunity to communicate with those who are familiar with VAST and are interested in knowing where it has been and where it will be going. We will share details from past courses, impart knowledge, and provide information on upcoming events. It is a means for us to keep in touch with everyone who has participated in VAST and remain firm in their commitment to change.

In this time of fear and panic, it is your optimism, strength, professionalism, and devotion to the health and wellbeing of others that inspires the hope and understanding that together, we will get past this.

Stay safe and take care of yourselves.



VAST in Whitehorse, Canada

By: Dr. Patty Livingston

Whitehorse is the capital of the Yukon Territory in Northern Canada, and is the largest city in the territory. From November 28 to December 1, 2019, the VAST Facilitator Course and VAST Course were offered for the first time in Whitehorse for interprofessional healthcare providers. An abbreviated two-day VAST Course was preceded by the two-day VAST Facilitator Course (FC) to train four Whitehorse-based nurses and one anesthesia resident from Dalhousie University. Graduates of the FC were then mentored as trainee facilitators to apply new skills during the VAST Course that immediately followed.

Whitehorse General Hospital (WGH) is the referral centre for the Yukon Territory, serving a large geographical area that faces challenges of a low-density population and requirements to transport highly complex patients to Southern Canada. Fulltime surgical services include general surgery, obstetrics and gynecology, orthopedics, with visiting services from ENT and ophthalmology. There are eight anesthesia providers. The perioperative team has the advantages of familiarity and well-practiced routines but nevertheless faces management of rare but serious cases, visiting staff not accustomed to practice patterns, and few opportunities for interprofessional training in non-technical skills.

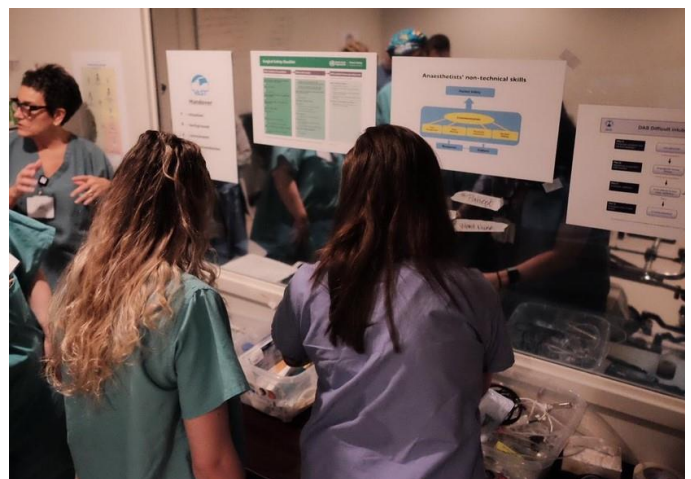


Participants in the Whitehorse VAST Course included seven nurses, six GPs, one general surgeon and one obstetrician gynecologist. The course was supported by six volunteer visiting facilitators, and five trainee facilitators.

The VAST Course was well-received and considered to be an excellent fit for Whitehorse. Participants valued interprofessional training, learning along with colleagues, the focus on non-technical skills, and the rich discussions during debriefing sessions.

“This course was truly a wonderful experience. I was challenged in a skill set I didn't know I had, and by the end of the course I was left feeling inspired. On Wednesday I will be facilitating a debrief with my staff on a difficult topic, and this process will hopefully help solve a long standing issue within my department. Thank you all so much for your teaching and support!”

Once this pandemic passes, plans will continue for newly trained facilitators to offer the course in other locations in Yukon as well as possibly in northern British Columbia and other locations in northern Canada.



VAST in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

By: Dr. Adam Mossenson

Dar es Salaam, a major port in Tanzania and formerly its capital, is the largest and fastest growing city in the country. From January 20 to 24, 2020, the VAST Facilitator Course (FC) and VAST Course were offered for the first time in Tanzania. Training was conducted at Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) in the Gradian Simulation Lab. The venue worked extremely well; two simulation rooms were established with separate debriefing rooms. A larger room was utilised for group sessions and presentations.

The week started with the two-day FC. Six trainee-facilitators and two trainee-course co-ordinators completed the facilitator training. A new technique was included in facilitator training. Pre-recorded scenarios were utilised, with course faculty playing the role of the scenario participants in real time. This allowed the trainee-facilitators to observe a scenario and practice the

various elements of debriefing without the need to setup and conduct a scenario.

The VAST Course followed the FC and was well attended by a varied mix of physician, non-physician and trainee anaesthesia providers, surgeons and nurses. The multidisciplinary group allowed for in-depth exploration of the factors that promote effective teamwork and some of the barriers faced in clinical practice.

The element of time management was reflected in the participants' evaluations and should be an ongoing focus of facilitator training and mentorship throughout course delivery.



The future for VAST in Tanzania is bright. The local trainee-facilitator pool will continue to undergo mentorship and gain further experience in facilitation with the upcoming refresher course in Dar / Mbeya VAST Course that are funded by the Laerdal Foundation. The establishment of a dedicated set of VAST equipment and teaching resources will allow for seamless ongoing delivery of VAST by the Tanzanian team.

There is growing experience with delivering VAST in East African Countries. Support of courses that foster this local partnership will help to develop a cadre of VAST Facilitators in the region, strengthen the medical education workforce and build a truly sustainable means of delivery of simulation-based education.

VAST in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

By: Dr. Adam Mossenson

Centrally located, Addis Ababa is both Ethiopia's capital and biggest city. Between January 27 and February 1, 2020, the VAST Instructor Course (IC) and VAST Course were conducted in Addis Ababa. It was the first time the IC was hosted in Ethiopia, but the second time the VAST Course was offered, with the first being held in January/early February, 2019. VAST leadership proposed that holding the IC in Ethiopia would be an efficient means of exposing interested participants from Ethiopia, Kenya and Sudan to VAST, with the downstream effect of enabling implementation of VAST in new regions.

The Courses were conducted at Addis Ababa University (Black Lion Hospital). The courses were held across several rooms in the simulation centre, a site that is utilised by many departments within the university. The CASIEF fellows, in conjunction with the local simulation co-ordinator, were able to secure sufficient space for the VAST IC. We were fortunate to be able to secure an additional very large teaching room for the VAST Course. This was used for whole group presentations as well as one of the simulation and debriefing spaces. Teaching resources were left in a VAST labelled suitcase for future use.

The VAST IC was expansive. Fourteen participants were trained by 11 facilitators. IC participants, or 'trainee-facilitators', were able to apply new skills over the following three-day VAST Course. A final IC training day was conducted after the completion of the VAST Course, which saw thoughtful implementation plans generated for new sites. In addition, there was enthusiasm for development of locally driven research, monitoring and evaluation of VAST's impact. A palpable sense of mentorship and camaraderie developed amongst the trainee facilitators.

The VAST IC provided an excellent opportunity for developing new trainee-facilitators, enhancing skills of people with prior VAST experience and for immersion of new 'recruits' who plan to implement the program in new regions. The VAST Course trained 13 multi-professional participants who appreciated VAST's simulation training and the applicability of course content.

VAST IC culminated with implementation planning; proposals were generated to bring VAST to diverse and new regions within Ethiopia and abroad, with dissemination plans for Ethiopia (Black Lion, St Pauls, Hawassa, Jimma, and Baher), Kenya and Sudan.



Upcoming Events

At this moment, all global efforts must be on addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. All VAST Courses are cancelled until this crisis has passed. Rest assured that we will actively resume VAST training programs as soon as it is safe to do so.