

# CFAHR Evidence Brief

## Use of simulation to reduce speech pathology clinical placement time

### Authors and Affiliations

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### Alignment with [Metro South Health Research Strategy 2019 - 2024](#)

- Build research capability
- Increase research capacity
- Embed research in clinical services
- Translate research to better health
- Research excellence

### Alignment with [Allied Health Research Capability & Development Strategy 2017 - 2020](#)

- Engage staff as research consumers
- Enable staff as research generators
- Build research-enabling infrastructure and strategic processes
- Strengthen leadership in research and innovation
- Enhance internal research collaboration and synergy
- Strengthen partnerships with consumers and external stakeholders

### Alignment with [Allied Health Research Capability & Development Strategy 2017 - 2020](#)

- Standard 1 – Clinical Governance
- Standard 2 – Partnering with consumers
- Standard 3 – Preventing and controlling healthcare-associated infection
- Standard 4 – Medication safety
- Standard 5 – Comprehensive care
- Standard 6 – Communicating for safety
- Standard 7 – Blood management
- Standard 8 – Recognising and responding to acute deterioration

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## Practice Issue

Speech pathology students are required to undertake clinical placements as a key component in the development of professional skills. However, there are increasing difficulties sourcing available and appropriate student placements. Simulation (where students learn through replication of clinical experiences) is a training model that can be used across all sectors of health care training. In other discipline areas such as physiotherapy student training, simulation has been shown to provide a viable teaching method to support student attainment of clinical skills. As only limited evidence for the use of simulation in speech pathology training programs existed, a large-scale national study was conducted to determine its use as an alternative to traditional speech pathology clinical placement models.

## Evidence

A non-inferiority national randomised control trial was conducted with 325 speech pathology students across six Australian universities. Students were randomised to either the traditional placement only group, or the placement + simulation group. Overall, results found that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups for their end-placement clinical competency assessments, evaluated using the Competency Assessment in Speech Pathology (COMPASS®) tool. These results were consistent across different placement types (e.g. block vs sessional), placement lengths and varying adult caseload areas. A number of key elements were considered to potentially influence trial outcomes including: timing of placement within the clinical program (all students were in the middle third of their program), use of a simulation framework gradually transitioning from simple to more complex scenarios and simulation training for staff.

## Practice Change

Results from this study suggest that adult communication and/or swallowing disorder simulations can replace a proportion of traditional placement time for speech pathology students in the middle-third of their degree. Outcomes support the incorporation of simulation as an alternative placement model for students. This simulation clinical model has now been implemented within a number of Australian university settings. This has enabled universities to reduce a proportion of the time students need to attend clinical placements within the health service – helping to relieve some of the pressure on clinical staff who take students on adult placements within health services.

## Publication/s

Hill, A. E., Ward, E., Heard, R., McAllister, S., McCabe, P., Penman, A., Caird, E., Aldridge, D., Baldac, S., Cardell, E., Davenport, R., Davidson, B., Hewat, S., Howells, S., Purcell, A., Walters, J. (2020). Simulation can replace part of speech-language pathology placement time: A randomised controlled trial, *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, DOI: 10.1080/17549507.2020.1722238

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Based on the Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association's Health Policy Evidence Brief

Metro South Health Research Strategy 2019 – 2024 [https://gheps.health.qld.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0012/2325000/research-strategy.pdf](https://gheps.health.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0012/2325000/research-strategy.pdf)

Allied Health Research Capability & Development Strategy 2017 – 2020 <https://metrosouth.health.qld.gov.au/sites/default/files/allied-health-research-strategy.pdf>

National Safety and Quality Health Service Standards <https://www.safetyandquality.gov.au/sites/default/files/migrated/Overview-of-the-NSQHS-Standards-second-edition.pdf>