

# Using in situ simulation to reduce fear and insecurity among healthcare professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic

## Introduction

As COVID-19 spread in Europe it was necessary to reorganize patient intake for Aarhus University Hospital (AUH), which contains more than 1200 beds.

As a response to the pandemic, AUH established 134 isolation rooms. A total of 69 in-situ simulations, involving 277 participating healthcare professionals, were carried out to prepare the staff.



## In situ simulation

The in situ simulation contained two scenarios and lasted 90 minutes.

Learning objectives:

- ABCDE-approach to the acute respiratory affected patient.
- Teamwork in the acute situation with an isolated COVID-19 patient.
- Correct use of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

## Interviews

Qualitative data was collected through four focus groups.



## Quotes from participants

"I don't feel nervous anymore. It makes me feel more confident... The knowledge regarding how their condition really is, have been clarified through these simulations. Knowing how to act made me less nervous when taking care of the covid-19 patients afterwards."

"Things have been so uncertain, and everything has been changing by the day. We've had to try to keep up... But you demystify things during simulation, by simply turn up the oxygen and so on. You also learn to act different when you wear the PPE, it gave me a sense of security."



## Findings

Several participants reported feelings of fear, anxiety, and chaos related to the involvement in the early COVID-19 response.

The in-situ simulations generated a demystification of the COVID-19 patients and created a feeling of know-how and security through both the personal and collaborative experience with treatment and PPE. Thus reducing fear and anxiety among the participants.

However, the simulations could not remedy the feeling of chaos that was caused by the major organizational changes and new logistics.



## Take home messages

- In situ simulation can be used to redefine safety among healthcare professionals.
- Incorporating in situ simulation in the early stages of a pandemic response will be recommended.