

Hands-on Vehicle Extrication Experience Enhances Emergency Medicine Residents' Understanding of Prehospital Care

Olsson, Daniel, Grant, William, Wojick, Susan

INTRODUCTION:

Emergency Medicine residents rely on the ability of prehospital care providers to recount details of vehicular incidents. Direct personal experience at a 'scene' is designed to help residents better understand: mechanism of injury, personal safety at the crash scene, vehicle extrication equipment and methods, and difficulties associated with patient extrication and as a result to be better able to communicate with on-the-scene personnel. A survey of ACGME Emergency Medicine programs revealed that only 22 % of responding Emergency Medicine Residency directors reported having such programs.

METHODS:

In conjunction with a local volunteer fire department residents perform actual hands-on vehicle extrication using hand and pneumatic tools to remove a live 'victim' from a vehicle. Instructional components include review of safety issues regarding the use of tools and devices; scene safety; personnel safety; as well as an overview of vehicle anatomy.

RESULTS:

During the first year of the program, the resident class was divided between two different local fire departments. This proved not to be adequate as one of the departments would allow observation only. This was deemed not an acceptable experience. Currently, a single fire company is used, with the educational program provided to two separate groups of five residents to assure an appropriate experience.

CONCLUSIONS:

Residents completing the program anecdotally report new and significant understandings of what is involved in vehicle extrication. Likewise, firefighters and paramedics report that during subsequent patient transports they feel substantially more comfortable relaying information, requesting orders and obtaining follow-up from the residents.