INTRODUCTION

Acute traumatic wounds are common, consistently ranking in the top ten reasons for emergency room visits for adult males and all pediatric patients under the age of 15 (1). In the wilderness setting, a comprehensive approach to acute wound care is especially critical. Definitive treatment can be hours to weeks away. The limitation of available medical resources and the variety of acute traumatic wounds present a challenge. This instructional module will present an evidence-based approach to acute wound management, describe techniques that are applicable in remote and unclean environments, and provide a hands-on experience to adult learners of both medical and non-medical backgrounds.

STUDY OBJECTIVES

Upon completion of this module, the learner will be expected to 1) Reinforce a systematic approach to wound assessment; 2) Discuss medical improvisation techniques and the limitations of wound closure in wilderness settings; 3) Address major misconceptions about interventions for severe/uncontrolled bleeding; 4) Recognize the importance of flexibility and heightened vigilance for what may initially appear to be a minor/uncomplicated injury; 5) Practice forms of wound closure, improvised irrigation strategies, and emergent hemostatic control.

METHODS

"Wound Management in the Wilderness Workshop," is an instructor-guided educational unit designed to be used in an interactive presentation requiring two hours. The instructional module will be presented in three parts. The first part will be a brief description of a general approach to wound care highlighting pearls and pitfalls, based on a 2010 review article (2). The second part is a small group rotation through four stations; wilderness closure techniques, interaction with a vascular damage wound model, water sterilization and wound irrigation strategies, and a case report discussion. A debriefing concludes the workshop. Integration of basic principles in the simulations will be evaluated by direct observation and verbal feedback. A checklist of critical actions based on objectives standardizes the evaluation process by faculty proctors. At the completion of the workshop, participants will complete a written evaluation of the activity.

CONCLUSION

Upon completion of this module, the learner will be expected to 1) Reinforce a systematic approach to wound assessment; 2) Discuss medical improvisation techniques and the limitations of wound closure in wilderness settings; 3) Address major misconceptions about interventions for severe/uncontrolled bleeding; 4) Recognize the importance of flexibility and heightened vigilance for what may initially appear to be a minor/uncomplicated injury; 5) Practice forms of wound closure, improvised irrigation strategies, and emergent hemostatic control.

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