

Response to “A call for revolution in first aid education”

I read with curiosity and much interest on the captioned article. The timely application of first aid is so dear to the heart and spirit of professionals providing emergency care. Every day we see health, and even life, is lost as a result of delay or lack of response when situation arises. Many agencies have been providing first aid education for decades but we still see a lot of medical scenarios which should not happen. How effective is our first aid education and how the learning is translated to actual action in emergency situations is not very well studied and known.

In Hong Kong, one of the most metropolitan cities in Asia, emergency care providers have been sad to see low by-stander cardiopulmonary resuscitation response rate and poor survival outcome despite years of first aid education promulgation by various government agencies and volunteer associations. From an outcome based perspective, our first aid education strategy has not been very successful, if not failed. Greater industrious effort to organize more first aid classes is unlikely to significantly improve the current situation. Revolutionary approach is demanded if something different is to happen. From an organizational perspective, the formation of Resuscitation Council of Hong Kong in 2012 might help to pull resources together with a view to achieve impact. Apart from the medical science domain of the Utstein formula for survival, social, behavioral and educational domains are the main gaps to be filled for successful implementation of the learnt knowledge and skills on the subjects required first aid.

This white paper has rightly pointed out that emphasis of first aid education has to be re-steered. Definitions have to be re-defined. Effectiveness of first aid education has to be measured, in terms of impact on health. Implementation strategy should be revolutionized. Obstacles have to be removed in order to encourage application of first aid knowledge and skill on the needy. All these differ in different communities and cultures. Researches and studies should be geared toward these domains.

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