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Artificial Intelligence-Driven Simulation Training in Medicine: A Contemporary Narrative Review

Selçuk Akturan

Department of Medical Education, Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Medicine, Trabzon, Türkiye

ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly transforming healthcare simulation training by enhancing learning experiences, optimizing skill acquisition, and providing personalized feedback. This review synthesizes current evidence on AI-driven simulation training across medical disciplines, exploring its applications, advantages, limitations, and future directions. Based on a comprehensive PubMed search identifying relevant literature, this review integrates the most significant contributions to provide a critical and integrative perspective. AI-driven simulation training enhances medicine by improving communication skills, surgical proficiency, diagnostic accuracy, and clinical decision-making. AI-powered tools provide real-time feedback, personalized learning, and standardized assessments across various healthcare disciplines. Despite its benefits, challenges such as data privacy, high costs, and ethical concerns hinder widespread adoption. Future efforts should focus on standardization, collaboration, and ethical integration to optimize AI's role in medical training. AI-driven simulation training is transforming medicine by providing personalized, data-driven learning and enhancing skill development. While challenges like cost, data security, and ethics persist, ongoing research and collaboration can facilitate AI's seamless integration. With continued advancements, AI holds the potential to improve competency and patient safety in healthcare training.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, medical training, medicine, simulation training

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Address for correspondence: Dr. Selçuk Akturan. Department of Medical Education, Karadeniz Technical University Faculty of Medicine, Trabzon, Türkiye

Phone: +90 533 665 04 51

E-mail: selcukakturan@gmail.com

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INTRODUCTION

Medical education has undergone significant changes with the integration of artificial intelligence (AI)-driven technologies, particularly in simulation-based training. Traditional medical training relies heavily on direct patient interactions, didactic lectures, and supervised clinical practice.[1,2] However, limitations such as patient safety concerns, variability in case exposure, and subjective skill assessments have led to the development of AI-enhanced simulation training tools.[3] These tools provide structured, repeatable, and adaptive learning experiences, allowing healthcare professionals to refine their competencies in a risk-free environment.[4-7]

The application of AI- in medicine extends beyond technical skills to include communication training, decision-making, and performance assessment.[8] AI-enhanced simulations can provide individualized feedback, improve skill retention, and facilitate standardization in training programs. Given the increasing adoption of AI-based training across multiple medical specialties, a systematic analysis of its effectiveness, challenges, and future potential is necessary.[9-12] This review aims to evaluate AI-driven simulation training, discuss its applications in various medical disciplines, and explore its future implications.

METHODS

This study is a narrative review that synthesizes and critically examines the current literature on AI-driven simulation training in medicine. The review follows a structured approach to ensure a comprehensive and balanced analysis of existing research while allowing for flexibility in exploring emerging themes and trends.

Literature search strategy

The PubMed and CINAHL databases were used for searching the same keywords and compared the results. Since PubMed provided the most comprehensive coverage, encompassing results from the other databases, researcher opted to focus solely on PubMed for analysis.

The search was performed using key terms such as "[Artificial intelligence], [AI], [Medicine], [Medical], [Healthcare], [Training], [Education], [Simulation]" in combination with Boolean operators (AND/OR) to refine the search. In addition to the database search, the reference lists of all relevant articles were manually screened, which resulted in the identification of six additional studies that met the inclusion criteria and were incorporated into the review.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Studies included in this review met the following criteria:

- Peer-reviewed articles
- Studies focusing on AI-driven simulation in medicine
- Articles published in English
- Publications from January 2020 to 2025

to ensure relevance to contemporary developments.

Studies were excluded if they were:

- Editorials, opinion pieces, dissertations, or preprints not subjected to peer review
- Focused on non-medical applications of the topic
- Lacking sufficient methodological transparency.

Data extraction and thematic analysis

Relevant articles were reviewed, and key concepts, findings, and methodological approaches were systematically extracted. A thematic analysis was conducted following Creswell's qualitative content analysis approach, in which recurring concepts across the included studies were coded, categorized, and synthesized into overarching themes. [13] The synthesis process involved:

1. Categorizing findings into key domains (e.g., technological advancements, training methodologies, effectiveness, challenges, and future directions)
2. Comparing and contrasting studies to highlight consistencies and divergences in results
3. Identifying knowledge gaps to propose areas for future research.

Quality assessment

Although a formal systematic review was not conducted, efforts were made to ensure methodological rigor by prioritizing peer-reviewed studies with transparent methodology, adequate sample descriptions, and clearly reported outcomes, and by excluding sources with potential bias.

This approach enables a comprehensive yet flexible examination of the literature, offering critical insights into the topic while identifying gaps and potential future directions.

RESULTS

The integration of AI into simulation-based medical training has led to significant advancements across multiple healthcare disciplines. AI-driven simulation enhances clinical skills, decision-making, and personalized learning, offering innovative training approaches tailored to the needs of medical learners. Based on a thematic synthesis of the literature, six key domains of AI applications in simulation training have been identified.

AI-driven communication and interpersonal skills training

AI-powered virtual patients and natural language processing systems have transformed communication training in medical education by providing interactive, real-time feedback. These systems simulate diverse patient interactions, helping trainees refine diagnostic questioning, counseling, and interpersonal skills.[14,15] AI-generated standardized patient dialogues are particularly useful for prenatal counseling, breaking bad news, and patient education.[3]

Moreover, AI-driven conversational agents enhance patient-doctor communication training by mimicking complex emotional responses, enabling medical students to practice empathetic communication in a controlled, iterative environment. This is particularly valuable in training healthcare professionals to navigate sensitive discussions such as end-of-life care, informed consent, and cultural competency in healthcare delivery.[16]

AI in procedural and surgical simulation training

AI-enhanced surgical simulators integrate virtual reality,

augmented reality, and robotic-assisted technologies to improve procedural accuracy and surgical competency. AI-powered robotic surgery training platforms, such as the Da Vinci surgical system, provide real-time feedback, assisting trainees in refining their motor skills and decision-making abilities.[17]

Furthermore, AI-driven tele-surgical training offers remote mentorship and skill assessment, particularly benefiting medical learners in resource-limited settings by facilitating access to global surgical expertise.[18,19] Several studies have demonstrated that AI-enhanced laparoscopic and microsurgical simulations significantly improve procedural confidence, reduce operative errors, and enhance skill retention among trainees.[20,21]

AI-based ultrasound guidance systems are also being integrated into regional anesthesia training, assisting clinicians in needle placement and reducing the likelihood of complications.[22]

AI in dental and endodontic training

In dental education, AI has been applied in radiographic interpretation, treatment planning, and skill assessment, improving students' diagnostic accuracy and decision-making abilities.[8] AI-driven radiological image analysis tools support dental trainees in differentiating complex dental pathologies, improving patient safety by reducing misdiagnosis rates.[23]

In addition, AI-based haptic simulation training is being explored to enhance manual dexterity and fine motor control in dental procedures, particularly for endodontic and restorative procedures. AI-powered feedback mechanisms help trainees adjust their techniques in real-time, leading to greater precision in operative dentistry.

AI-generated imaging for medical training

AI-generated radiological images have revolutionized medical training by providing a diverse range of pathologies that can be used for diagnostic practice. AI-generated mammographic datasets and synthetic chest X-rays are now being used to enhance radiology training programs, enabling students to improve diagnostic accuracy and case interpretation skills.[24]

Similarly, AI-assisted osseous biopsy simulations are being integrated into orthopedic and pathology training, enhancing precision in bone tumor diagnosis and guided biopsies.[25] AI-driven pathology simulation models allow learners to practice recognizing microscopic patterns in tissue samples, improving histopathological diagnosis.

AI in clinical decision-support training

AI-based clinical decision-support systems enhance medical trainees' ability to analyze complex patient cases, refine diagnostic reasoning, and optimize treatment planning.[26] These systems provide data-driven recommendations, helping trainees navigate clinical uncertainty and integrate evidence-based decision-making into their practice.

AI-driven neurological and oncological training platforms allow students to simulate real-world patient management scenarios, improving critical thinking and decision-making in high-risk specialties such as neurosurgery and oncology.[27]

DISCUSSION

The integration of AI into simulation-based medical training has transformed traditional educational paradigms by providing adaptive, data-driven learning environments. AI-driven simulations offer personalized skill development, real-time feedback, and enhanced procedural accuracy, addressing key limitations of conventional training methods. However, despite these advancements, several challenges must be considered, including ethical concerns, technological constraints, and accessibility barriers. This section explores AI's role as a complementary tool in medical training, examines regulatory and ethical challenges, and discusses strategies for optimizing AI's integration into medical education.

AI as an augmentative tool in simulation training

The integration of AI into medical simulation training has introduced novel, data-driven educational models that enhance learning efficiency, accuracy, and adaptability. However, AI-driven tools should be viewed as complementary rather than replacements for traditional medical education methodologies. AI-powered virtual patients and conversational AI models, for instance, offer structured communication training but cannot fully replicate the nuances of human interaction, particularly in complex emotional exchanges.[15,28,29]

Similarly, while AI-driven surgical simulation significantly enhances technical skills, tactile feedback and real patient exposure remain essential for mastering procedural competence.[17] AI should therefore be integrated into hybrid learning models, combining simulation with bedside patient encounters for a more comprehensive training approach.

Ethical and regulatory challenges

Despite AI's educational benefits, several ethical and regu-

latory concerns remain. One of the major concerns is algorithmic bias, which can result from AI models being trained on non-representative datasets, leading to disparities in training outcomes.[30] In addition, AI-driven decision-support tools must be validated rigorously to ensure their accuracy, reliability, and clinical applicability.[31,32]

Bridging the digital divide

The high cost of AI-driven simulation tools, hardware requirements, and limited access to AI infrastructure pose barriers to widespread adoption, particularly in low-resource settings.[33] Expanding access to open-source AI training models and promoting AI-driven cloud-based simulation platforms could help democratize medical training.[34]

Limitations

This narrative review has several limitations. The included studies vary considerably in design, outcome measures, and reporting quality, which limits the ability to synthesize findings and draw generalizable conclusions. In addition, some studies lacked sufficient detail regarding sample characteristics, evaluation procedures, or AI model performance, reducing the clarity and comparability of the evidence. Finally, as this review is not systematic, the possibility of publication bias and the exclusion of non-peer-reviewed sources should be acknowledged.

Future directions for AI in medical simulation training

The future directions identified in this review were derived directly from the gaps observed in the existing literature. To fully harness AI's potential in medical education, future research should focus on:

- Standardization and validation: Establishing rigorous validation frameworks for AI-based training tools and conducting large-scale randomized controlled trials to assess effectiveness[35]
- Interdisciplinary collaboration: Enhancing cooperation among medical educators, AI developers, and policymakers to bridge the gap between AI advancements and real-world clinical training needs
- Ethical AI ımplementation: Developing clear ethical guidelines for AI use in medical training, ensuring accountability, transparency, and bias mitigation. Institutional review boards should oversee AI-driven training programs
- Curriculum ıntegration: Embedding AI-enhanced simulation training into standardized medical curricula, incorporating it into competency-based assessment models to ensure accessibility and effectiveness
- Longitudinal studies: Conducting long-term research to evaluate AI's impact on skill retention, clinical decision-making, and patient safety outcomes.[36]

CONCLUSION

AI-driven simulation training is transforming medical education by offering personalized, data-driven learning experiences. By integrating machine learning, virtual patients, and robotics, AI enhances clinical competency, procedural accuracy, and decision-making. Despite its potential, challenges such as cost, data security, and ethical concerns must be addressed for widespread adoption. Interdisciplinary collaboration and ongoing research are essential to optimize AI's integration into medical training. Establishing robust ethical guidelines and validating AI-based training models will ensure equitable and effective implementation. **Moreover, the adaptability of AI-driven simulation approaches suggests potential value for family medicine and primary care training, where scalable and standardized educational tools are increasingly needed.** With continued advancements, AI has the potential to improve medical education, enhance skill development, and ultimately contribute to better patient safety.

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