

CLINICAL "SNIPPETS"

Resuscitation on television: Realistic or ridiculous? A quantitative observational analysis of the portrayal of cardiopulmonary resuscitation in television medical drama.

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Overview: Patients' preferences for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) relate to their perception about the likelihood of success of the procedure. There is evidence that the lay public largely base their perceptions about CPR on their experience of the portrayal of CPR in the media. The medical profession has generally been critical of the portrayal of CPR on medical drama programmes although there is no recent evidence to support such views. This study compared the patient characteristics, cause and success rates of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) on medical television drama with published resuscitation statistics.

Conclusions: Whilst the immediate success rate of CPR in medical television drama does not significantly differ from reality the lack of depiction of poorer medium to long term outcomes may give a falsely high expectation to the lay public. Equally the lay public may perceive that the incidence and likely success of CPR is equal across all age groups.