

## Pre-hospital POCUS, then and now

In this issue of the journal you can read about a qualitative study exploring the views of Emergency Care Practitioners on pre-hospital point-of-care ultrasound (POCUS).<sup>1</sup> In general, participants believed that pre-hospital POCUS had diagnostic value that could positively influence patient care. There were, however, some caveats – views that POCUS may (at least in some cases) take the focus off rapid transportation to hospital and that it would require significant cost and training that could be used for other more meaningful resources (the authors argue that, based on international experience, training could meet the needs of pre-hospital POCUS providers with fairly easy and cost-effective courses).

This article reminded me of another local pre-hospital POCUS study completed in 2013 but never published - in the days before SAJPEC.<sup>2</sup> This study was in the form of a Delphi survey aimed at determining the feasibility of pre-hospital POCUS from a panel of experts, all of whom were medical practitioners active in emergency care (not necessarily pre-hospital) and accredited emergency ultrasound providers or trainers. Not all statements included in the survey achieved consensus after two rounds (consensus was considered to be 75% or more agreement). Of those that did, there were some interesting (and in some cases different) opinions about pre-hospital POCUS. There was a much greater emphasis on limited utility in trauma, airway management and fluid resusci-

tation in urban environments. The expert panel did feel strongly that pre-hospital POCUS could play an important role in the management of aortic aneurysms, cardiac arrest resuscitation and (more generally) in inter-facility transfers. With regard to training, consensus statements included that all levels of Advanced Life Support qualifications should be trained, and that training should be included in coursework for qualifications and not added afterwards as a short course. Although this data is almost a decade old, some views on the application and usefulness of pre-hospital POCUS seem to be consistent and there is agreement that it has a place in pre-hospital emergency care in South Africa.

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## References

1. Vincent-Lambert C, Marx E, and Nugteren B van. Emergency care practitioners' views on the use of ultrasound in pre-hospital acute care settings. *South African Journal of Pre-hospital Emergency Care* 2022;3:2–6.
2. Bester G. The feasibility of ultrasound in South African pre-hospital emergency care: a Delphi study. Research Report. University of Johannesburg, 2013.