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Letter to the Editor

May emoji improve CPR knowledge?



To the Editor,

Treatment of extra-hospital cardiac arrest requires prompt intervention. In fact, the shorter the response time, the greater the survival and neurological outcomes.¹ Among the factors identified, the response time of a bystander was found to be crucial. Today, there are numerous ways to inform and disseminate cardiopulmonary resuscitation techniques to the community and the introduction of numerous smartphone applications have allowed bystanders to intervene early and improve the overall quality of the resuscitation.²

Currently, the information messages of the CPR are conveyed through a written form and graphic form (images, videos), however, at the global level, a new digital language comes forward that uses iconographic symbols, called emoji characters, as its means to convey ideas and feelings. These characters were found to overcome language, cultural and national barriers. Currently, emojis are used in text messages and in posts on major social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter) sites, and on other platforms such as payment or dating applications.³ Currently, there is no symbol concerning cardiopulmonary resuscitation in the current list of emoji (Emoji Unicode List version 12.0) on cell phones and smartphones worldwide.

We think that a further step forward in the spread of CPR culture could be given through the inclusion of new emoji characters that represent the main contents of the rescue chain. We have elaborated 8 emoji pictures that depict the culture of cardiopulmonary resuscitation. These pictures are of standard in size (128 × 128 pixels) and have a design that is characterized by an easy visualization and cognitive understanding (Fig. 1). The developed emojis represent six actions and two symbols: unresponsive and not breathing normally person, rescue breaths, two pictures about chest compression, three that indicate the site of defibrillator paddle plate application and indicating the presence of an AED and a semiautomatic defibrillator. They can be used individually and coupled in order to describe all the sequences of the BLS/AED algorithm, using only 26 characters (Fig. 1).

The introduction of new emojis characters regarding CPR will represent an opportunity to develop greater dissemination of the culture of cardiopulmonary resuscitation and early defibrillation in society, and also for a better retention of the resuscitation knowledge in it. Furthermore, they will contribute to the development of a civic engagement culture and positive action toward the community. For these reasons the development of these emojis should be supported, encouraged and analyzed to assess their impact on survival.

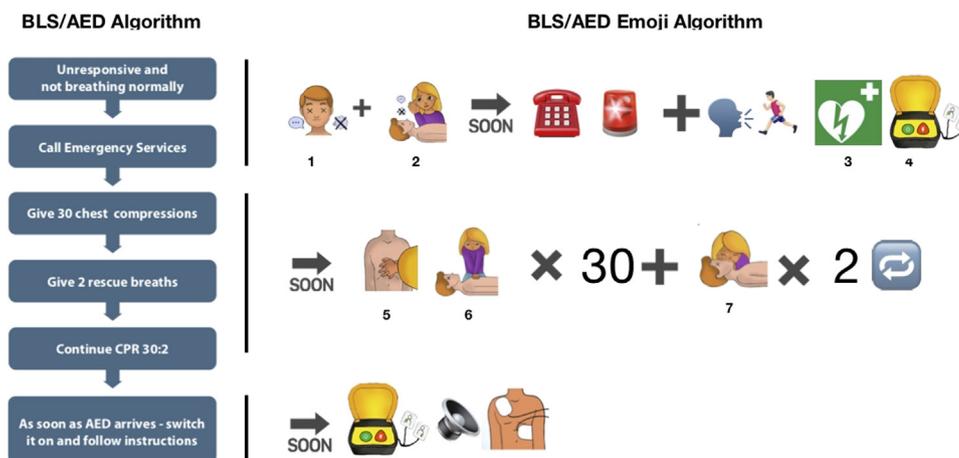


Fig. 1 – Comparison of the classic BLS/AED algorithm with a BLS/AED algorithm consisting of an emoji and text. The numbers indicate the emojis we designed and that are not present in version 12.0 of the Unicode list of emojis.

Conflicts of interest

None.

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