

Transcript

Elspeth Boxall

Hello and welcome to our next series of NES Pharmacy podcasts. In this series, we are going to discuss the topic of Simulation in context of NES Pharmacy Simulation team, and we have with us today to start us off, um, Scott McColgan-Smith, who's the Principal Lead for NES Pharmacy Simulation and Mairi Ward, who's one of our Senior Educators in the Simulation team. So, I'll hand over to you, Scott, first introduce yourself.

Scott McColgan Smith

Hi there. Thank you, Elspeth. Um, so my name's Scott McColgan-Smith. I am the Principal Lead for Simulation within NHS Education for Scotland and thank you for having us. Um, a little bit about me.

I began my career as a hospital pharmacist, uh, and later joined the education and training team, uh, in which I led on the prescribing education of medical students and junior doctors. As part of this role, that's where I was exposed to Simulation, and that's really where my interest in this educational modality was really formed and where, where I became quite passionate about it.

Um, in my current role with NES I'm responsible for the design, development, delivery and quality assurance of National Simulation Based Educational Programmes for the pharmacy workforce and I do find it a very interesting and rewarding role, which does involve a lot of creativity and working with a wide range of individuals across Scotland, uh, just to really bring some ideas to life.

Elspeth Boxall

Thank you, Scott. [Hi.] Hi, Mairi. Yeah, no, could you introduce yourself as well?

Mairi Ward

Thanks, Mairi. Yeah, so, hi. I am Mairi Ward, Senior Educator for Simulation within NES. I first started working as a Community Pharmacist. I worked for Boots for over 10 years and then moved into Primary Care.

I currently split my time between my educator role in NES and as pharmacist in primary care within Greater Glasgow and Clyde, and I'm also a Designated Supervisor and Designated Prescribing Practitioner for one of the current FTY trainees this year. I would say I've always had an interest in education and training and I also find myself being really drawn to new and innovative ways of doing things, so I think that kinda naturally led me to simulation.

Since my original training, I have supported several NES events, I've set up local simulation events within primary care and was also seconded to the medical education simulation team within Greater Glasgow and Clyde and I've been part of the NES

Pharmacy Simulation team for about 10 months now, and I work alongside Scott to deliver our programmes and fulfil the work outlined in our Pharmacy Simulation Strategy.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's brilliant. Thank you both and both from quite different backgrounds. That's probably really helpful to have that in the team. Um, so I guess probably what people are, really want to know, um, if they're new to the concepts of simulation is: what is it? So, I'll um, Scott, I'll let you explain that.

Scott McColgan-Smith

Thank you. Yeah, so it can mean lots of different things, but I'm going to focus on Immersive Simulation, which is our sort of gold standard for within NES Pharmacy.

So, I would say immersive simulation, it's unique, it's innovative, uh, way of, of educating, which really exposes learners to scenarios which closely replicate real world experiences, which is crucially within a safe environment. So, let's take one example just to visualise it.

So, imagine being transported into a Community Pharmacy consultation room where an actor enters the room playing the role of an unwell patient requiring your support and supply of medication. So, using different techniques, we can make this situation feel so immersive that you forget it's a simulation and behave and respond as you would in, in real life. So, what we hope is this provides you with that opportunity to practice a wide range of technical and non-technical skills without that risk of patient harm. So it's nice and safe. Of course, we can apply this technique, um, to other clinical settings and to a wide range of presenting complaints.

So, we, we've really got lots of scope with, with this technique, uh, and we use this style, uh, amongst others to provide interactive and meaningful learning experiences for our workforce currently.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's brilliant. That is really, that's a really helpful description and um, I wonder, Mairi, if there's one thing that you wish people understood about simulation in pharmacy, what would that be?

Mairi Ward

So, I think one thing I wish more people understood about simulation is that it isn't just role play. Um, I think it can be quite tricky for people who, who maybe don't have a lot of experience or any training in simulation to really understand the difference. Um, and maybe they don't appreciate all the benefits of simulation.

Um, what I would say is it's so much more than role play. Um, we often say simulation is an excuse for a conversation. So, like Scott has described, we would have a scenario kind of play out, like for example, our community pharmacy consultation, and then there is a debrief afterwards. So, this is a group discussion involving the scenario participant and

the observers who will have been watching via a video link, and this is really where most of the learning takes place.

We, we do really encourage active participation from all of the group members, and it should be a really relaxed, kind of open discussion amongst peers. We encourage that self-reflection kind of all sharing in the experience and really learning from each other and it's this aspect that I think sets simulation apart from traditional role play and it offers so many advantages like improving their skills, kind of increasing their confidence, better retention of learning. Um, and, and all of that ultimately leads to enhanced patient outcomes.

Elsbeth Boxall

That, that really does, you know, make it very clear what the benefits are, Mairi, thank you very much, and I wonder, Scott, do you want to add to that? Is there anything else you wish people understood a bit better about what you're doing with simulation?

Scott McColgan-Smith

Yes, I think that that was really nice, Mairi, touching upon the debrief and how important that is and I think to add to that, I wish that more people understood that although you can use simulation for lots of different things, we, we are primarily using it for learning and to support the workforce in really reaching their full potential.

I think that many people still do approach simulation with apprehension, with, with fear of being judged or being assessed, um, but this really simply is not the case within pharmacy education and our approach really allows participants to celebrate those successes. So, the things that go well, but crucially and, and most importantly really to highlight those learning needs which should be addressed post simulation to, to support that professional development going forward.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, absolutely. So yeah, it's there to develop not to, to criticise people. So that is, that's really important to understand. Absolutely. And um, I guess like leading on from that, Mairi, can I ask why we would think that simulation is such an important tool in pharmacy training and professional development?

Mairi Ward

Yeah, so, so I think we can, we can learn the knowledge and theory from textbooks, a lecture, webinar, etc, um, but it's also really important to learn by doing. So, simulation is that opportunity to put knowledge and skills into practice and for certain skills it's even more true.

So, for example, your kinda non-technical skills like communication, teamwork, leadership, um, they're more tricky to teach. So, it's, it's easier to actually practice them and the development, uh, of these is really an important aspect in our simulation delivery. I think simulation also provides an opportunity to put the skills into practice where the

participant may have been apprehensive to do so. So maybe during their experiential learning placements or, or real practice.

So, we know that risk adversity can be a significant hurdle for many pharmacists, um, which could have an impact on patient care. So, simulation provides that platform to practice all of these skills, um, with the risk to patients being removed, but we also want to provide the pharmacy workforce with the same opportunities as other professions. So, simulation is widely used amongst medics and nurses, for example.

So, we want our pharmacy workforce to really benefit from this too. Um, and we actually want to involve the other professions within our simulations. So interprofessional simulation, it basically involves one or more other professional groups, and it can really showcase pharmacists' skills and support in that sort of identity formation within the multidisciplinary team. Um, it really promotes the ability for them to integrate and, and voicing concerns, um, in the interests of patient safety.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's, that's an excellent description Mairi, you know, the kind of safe learning environment that you are managing to, to give people with simulation and also, you know, that importance of given the opportunity to build interprofessional, um, training as well. So, it's really an ex-, an excellent... And I wonder then again, following on from that, Scott, can you...? you can maybe share an example of when simulation, a sort... a particular simulation activity, that has a really strong impact on learners or on their practices?

Scott McColgan-Smith

Yeah, certainly. Um, I think we're, we're in a good place within pharmacy education at the moment and, and we're fortunate that we now have a number of simulation programmes that are up and running. Um, just thinking back to, to what we have on offer, I suppose our, our initial focus was on the Foundation Training Year and we're now ha-, happy to say that all trainee pharmacists have the opportunity to attend, uh, different events, uh, one's based in the community pharmacy setting and others in that interprofessional setting as well.

So, um, touching upon what, what Mairi mentioned for our pharmacists undertaking the NES Pathway to Advanced Practice Programme, we also offer immersive simulation programme, which helps put those skills into practice and, and consolidate that learning. We are also currently piloting two new simulation programmes for our Post Registration Foundation pharmacists and also support alum, a number of, uh, local innovations through our strong network of pharmacy simulation facilitators and also through the National Pharmacy Simulation Collaborative Group, which, uh, now meets quarterly.

So, it is quite hard to pick amongst these great opportunities. But if I was to, to pick out one, I think I would choose the Interprofessional Simulation, which is provided to our Foundation Training Year pharmacists involving trainee pharmacists learning alongside

final year medical students to manage acutely unwell patients in that hospital ward setting.

Through research, uh, we have been able to demonstrate transformative learning from this programme, which importantly leads to significant behavioural change, uh, so actual doing, diff-... behaving differently, going off into practice and, and using skills in different ways to benefit future practice and I think just generally, as you know, personally and as a team, we're very passionate about interprofessional learning, So another reason why I think that's, uh, very at the forefront of my mind.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, that's really interesting. It's really interesting to see how you can, you know, promote pharmacy as a profession within that as well and just, um, you know, I, I guess we all learn from each other and learn, um, you know, what their different roles are and it's good that that's being done early in people's careers. Um, I think then, thinking about the learners themselves, Mairi, can I ask you, how do you find learners typically respond to simulation? Say, what kind of feedback do you get from the learners?

Mairi Ward

So, kind of like other professional groups our learners within pharmacy, they, they do often come to simulation events feeling a bit apprehensive, possibly a bit stressed, um, and this isn't dependent on, on the learner group. We do see this from trainees kind of, you know, right up to those developing advanced practice portfolios.

Um, it is really part of our job to try and ease any concerns leading up to, and also during the simulation events, um, when learners do start to relax, they do really enjoy the sessions and they get so much more out of them and as I mentioned earlier, that sort of active participation, especially in the debrief is key. Um, so creating a space where people feel really comfortable and open to sharing is really important to us.

Um, after any events that the learners do typically respond very positively to participation in the SIM and, and we frequently receive feedback to see it's been one of the best learning experiences that they've had to date and many actually leave wanting more, they want us to do even more of it.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's excellent. You can't get better feedback than that, can you? Repeat, repeat customers? So, um, yeah, no, it sounds like yeah, once people understand what it is, then they, they really understand the benefits as well. So, um, I wonder just kind of moving on to a kinda slightly different aspect of this, um, I'm just curious, Scott, how do you design and develop the simulation scenarios themselves? Do you collaborate across NES, or do you collaborate against... with different health professionals? How do you go around it?

Scott McColgan-Smith

Yeah, it's, it's a good question. Um, there's, there's definitely a process that we follow, and I think that collaboration is, is very key to that. So, starting at the start, I suppose our

scenario development process usually starts by looking at the relevant curriculum for our target learners and understanding what their needs are. We then use constructive alignment educational framework to base the scenarios around intended learning outcomes and that's a really important starting point for us.

We also consider, um, using simulation to pro-, promote new ways of working such as, you know, introduction of new patient group directions or, or really poignantly at the moment, the introduction of prescribing much earlier in the career pathway for example. We also look to set a standard for that particular stage of practice to highlight, you know, what is really expected of the participants within their roles and also to try and push the pharmacy workforce forward into, you know, trying to ex-, expand that scope of practice.

To do this we gather information and ideas from the pharmacy simulation collaborative group, which I mentioned earlier, which currently has pharmacy simulation champions from all over Scotland attending and their input is, is really valuable for us just to understand what's going on out there. We also reach out to members of the Pharmacy Simulation Faculty Network, which we've built up over the last few years and now have good numbers and we, we..., you do that, and we seek individuals with experience in particular clinical areas of practice and sector as well might be important for us to...

We've talked a bit about interprofessional programmes and for those we do have to obviously work very closely with other professional groups to really co-design scenarios that meet the needs of the learners for not just our pharmacy workforce, but for every profession involved. Um, and probably the last bit of the puzzle is really that all the scenarios are reviewed and finalised by the NES Pharmacy Simulation team as part of that quality assurance process to really make sure, you know, finesse them and make sure they really tick all the boxes for us and, and meet the outcomes that we need.

Um, in addition to that, I think we are keen to, as I said, know what's going on out there. So we do often base scenarios on recent trends or, or errors that are arising to see how, if we can support the, you know, addressing these, um, we think about using scenarios with high risk medicines, things that are maybe a bit trickier, a bit more challenging for people and also crucially, we, we look at basing scenarios on real life experiences as well. So, stories or scenarios that we learn about from those working in practice, how can we use them to support the development of, of our scenarios? I think it work... does work really well for us.

Elspeth Boxall

Yeah, that sounds excellent. Sounds really responsive so you're really building and learning needs as they, as they arise. So that's incredible, thank you. Um, I guess this is, is all very, really, really positive, but I do, I suppose I do have to ask Mairi, what are the challenges, um, that you do face as a simulation team in delivering all this?

Mairi Ward

So, I suppose I think with everything there, there can be challenges. Um, and although simulation within pharmacy is growing, we do still have the challenge of, you know, some

people not knowing what it is, what the benefits are. Um, so we, we want to really champion the use of simulation within the pharmacy workforce and really encourage wider engagement across the profession.

Um, we want to build awareness and kind of highlight its value and, and we do hope that more teams will feel empowered to adopt this approach and, and support the kinda national programmes. Um, I think the more we share its benefits and the success stories, uh, the more likely others will be inspired to get involved, um, or at the very least kinda support their teams in doing so.

So kinda following on from this, a challenge we do sometimes face is getting sufficient numbers of faculty to support our events. We, we have an amazing network of simulation faculty and we are very, very grateful for the support that they do provide, but sometimes, you know, due to location of events, kinda specific areas of practice, workload pressures, etc, it, it can be difficult for our, our faculty to support events and also as I mentioned before, learners can be kind of apprehensive towards participation, so it can be tricky to kinda engage learners as well and to encourage their attendance at any of the kinda non-mandatory programmes we're... I think we're always looking at ways to help with this and to try and put their minds at ease and, and just continuing to promote all the benefits of simulation and hopefully that will come with time as more people experience it for themselves and and kinda realise it is a really great learning opportunity and that it actually it is quite fun, it's quite enjoyable for them.

Um, we're also keen to develop our professional programmes and whilst we do have strong support from the other professional groups, it just increases the complexity of it all. So, bringing the teams together, there's often kinda competing priorities, you know, scheduling issues, difficulty releasing staff. Um, we did recently do a Simulation Faculty Survey, so through feedback from that and just feedback in general from our, our faculty, we are aware of these challenges. Um, and, and while some aspects are outside our direct influence, we, we do remain committed to kinda doing all we can to support and, and really drive that positive change.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's very exciting. So, it's all really, really sounds so innovative and I do wonder then what, what is next for the NES Pharmacy Simulation team? Is there any exciting projects or innovations on the horizon?

Scott McColgan-Smith

Yes, thank you. We've always got lots going on. Um, so we published a, a three-year Pharmacy Simulation Strategy last year, so we're now one, one year on from that. Uh, and I'd recommend listeners having a look at that on our Turas page for, for more information, bit more detail. Um, some of the highlights from this then include the development of a scenario database to make the storage of simulation resources much easier and much more accessible for faculty and crucially just all in one, all in one place. Um, I'm hopeful that we'll be able to announce the launch of this very soon.

We are also making good progress with the development of simulation opportunities for Post Registration Foundation pharmacists, including some, some new, new ideas and, and the novel approaches and, uh, such as an escape room style scenarios where participants are faced with a series of prescribing tasks and clues to help them solve puzzles and ultimately beat the room. So that's quite interesting, quite exciting for us, uh, which we're developing at the moment.

Another important part of our strategy is to expand simulation opportunities more widely to our Pharmacy Technicians so that they can also benefit from the unique learning opportunities that simulation brings and I really do look forward to working closely with the Pharmacy Technician workforce and the development of this work and to providing them with faculty development opportunities to allow them to come forward to support local and national events as we have done already for our pharmacists.

Elsbeth Boxall

Yeah, so, so lots to look forward to in the future and as I'm..., now people are gonna be wondering how they can get involved. So, um, Mairi, over to you. How can pharmacy professionals get involved and benefit from all this work?

Mairi Ward

So yeah, we would welcome anyone who wants to get involved. Um, we would love to get more people, um, involved in the world of simulation. Um, so if anyone wants to get involved, we do have two training opportunities available. The first is our Tier One training, so this is called SIM Start and it's a one-day course designed to train participants in the delivery of simulation and this course is currently provided on a kind of as required basis, it really, depending on the needs of teams at a local level.

We also have our Tier Two training. So, this is called Introduction to Simulation and is a two-day course designed to equip participants in delivering and developing simulation and that includes scenario development. So, this course is delivered at the National SIM Centre in Forth Valley and we do sometimes get asked this, but you don't need to undertake Tier One first, you can just do Tier Two if you like. So, if anyone was wondering that you can just straight ahead do Tier Two if you wish.

So, from there, once you've got had some training, we will invite you to attend our NES programmes and events, eh, further trainings, scenario development opportunities and even the chance to get involved in some research if you wish. We can also link anyone up with local faculty to develop other programmes, you know, kind of based on any local needs and facilitate access and sharing of scenarios if needed.

I just kinda like to highlight, I suppose the benefit of supporting our programmes. So apart from it being a really enjoyable and rewarding experience, which a lot of people find it to be, is that we build faculty development into our courses. Um, so it's just to highlight that and also to, that say that we'll also happily support anyone you know, working towards like an RPS accreditation and wishing to gain any evidence for the education and training

domain of their portfolio. We've, we've done that in the past and kinda happy to support with that if, if needed.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's great. Thanks, Mairi. So, um, I think just before we wrap up, I guess a final question would be, and Scott you can maybe answer this, so if a, as somebody who's listening just now is just cu-, a bit curious about simulation, but just not quite sure where to start, where would be a just a good basic starting point for them to look, Scott?

Scott McColgan-Smith

Yeah, I, I think myself and Mairi, you know, we, we are the Simulation team at the moment at NES and um, we are always happy to be contacted from anyone that's interested in finding out a bit more about Pharmacy Simulation. So please don't hesitate to reach out if you've got a question or, or want to get more involved or, or maybe to undertake some of the training that Mairi's just outlined as well.

Uh, I would also direct people to our Pharmacy Simulation Turas page, which has information for participants, so those that will be attending and taking part in the programmes and also faculty that work, obviously work behind the scenes and facilitate. So, um, please have a look on there and also look out for any updates as well because we are always looking to add new things to the page to support, uh, you know, our network out there. Um, usually what happens if there's any updates, we'll, we'll highlight this in our monthly newsletter.

So, I think that's probably a good starting point. Um, and just to reiterate what Mairi said, we really do encourage people to, to come forward and, and help us and, and obviously, uh, support learners, but also to support your own professional development as well in doing so.

Elsbeth Boxall

That's absolutely brilliant, honestly, um, thank you so much. So, it's been really informative and quite inspiring actually for someone who didn't know much about simulation before we started today. I've certainly learned a lot and I'm sure, um, those listening today also have. So, thank you so much for your time. Um, I would... we will put the link to your Turas page in the podcast notes, so it'll be easy for people to access. Um, and yeah, best of luck with all the developments that you've got in store over the next, um, year and, and beyond. So, thanks so much for your time, both of you. Thanks Scott. Thanks, Mairi. Thank you.

Scott McColgan-Smith

Thank you.

Mairi Ward

Thank you. Thanks Elsbeth. Thank you.

Back Slide

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