



# Teaching innovation: enhancing undergraduate student pharmacist consultation skills by introducing 'Fishbowl' prescribing workshops

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## BACKGROUND

The 2021 'Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists'<sup>1</sup> outline the skills, knowledge, and attributes required to enable pharmacists to independently prescribe at the point of registration. Third-year MPharm students at UoN previously practised consultation skills in professional practice workshops, conducting OTC consultations. These lacked the depth required for pharmacy students to develop the skills required to meet the 2021 standards. A need for advanced consultation practice was identified, including:

Clinical  
history taking

Complex  
consultations

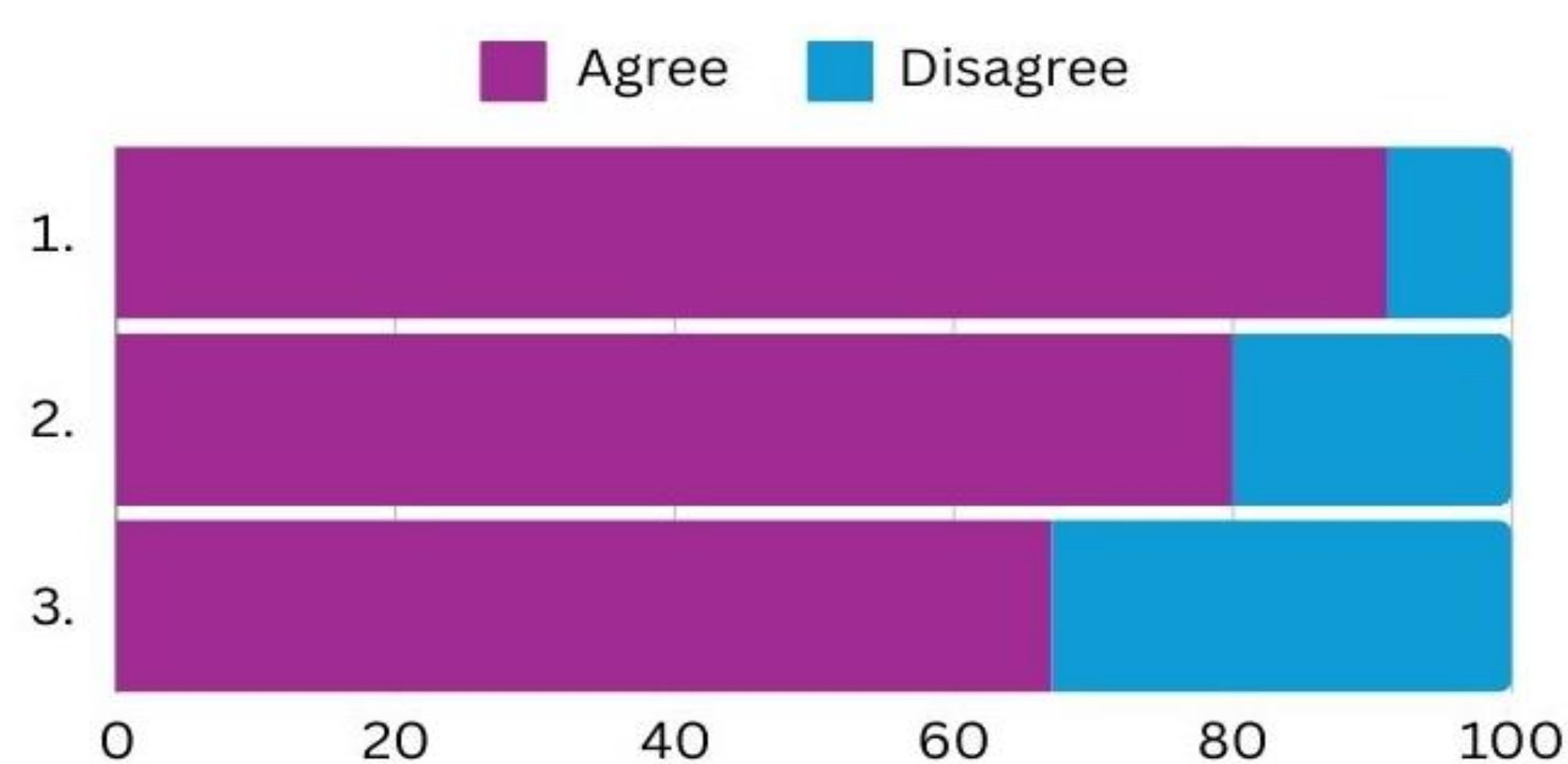
Prescribing

The new "Pharmaceutical Care and Prescribing" (PCAP) module was created, including 'Fishbowl' workshops. 'Fishbowl' is a small group teaching method where an individual student engages in a discussion, while observers form a circle around them<sup>2</sup> within a safe environment. Five new case studies incorporated a variety of clinical conditions, patient demographics and clinical settings, with emphasis on holistic, patient-centred care. 3rd-year students were timetabled for five workshops, in groups of ~25. Facilitators regularly discussed consultation progress, outstanding care issues and gave feedback.

## METHOD

Following the five workshops, all third-year students (n=256) were invited via email to complete a Microsoft Forms questionnaire, to evaluate the workshop aims. The questionnaire included ten 5-point Likert-scale questions and free-text answers. Primarily quantitative methods were used with free-text responses used to contextualise results.

## RESULTS



- 1.91%** felt fishbowls helped practise taking a clinical history.
- 2.80%** felt they better understood how to include shared-care decision making into their consultations.
- 3.67%** said sessions helped them to better understand the pharmacist's role in prescribing.

*"It would have been nice to have scenarios where we prescribed a POM in the end for more of the sessions to help us get used to thinking like prescribers"*  
-PCAP student,  
(regarding pharmacist prescribing awareness)

**85%** would recommend the teaching technique to other MPharm students.

**76%** felt these sessions should be introduced in earlier years of the MPharm course.

A few students commented that the facilitation style varied considerably depending on academics involved.

82 students (32%) completed the questionnaire.

+ *"very thought-provoking sessions and easy to interact and learn from each other"*  
-PCAP student

## DISCUSSIONS

- 'Fishbowl' workshops provide a suitable environment for practising clinical history taking and prescribing, and were generally well received by students.
- Further work is needed to integrate this teaching technique earlier in the MPharm programme.
- Facilitator skills play a significant part in student engagement, we need to ensure there is appropriate staff training to run this session type.
- Limitations of the study include lack of comparison against other student teaching tools.

This study obtained ethical approval from the University of Nottingham, School of Pharmacy Postgraduate Research Projects Ethical Approval group.

1. General Pharmaceutical Council. Standards for the initial education and training of pharmacists. 2021

2. 2. Sutherland, R., Reid, K., Kok, D. and Collins, M. (2012), Teaching a fishbowl tutorial: sink or swim?. The Clinical Teacher, 9: 80-84.

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