

An evaluation of simulation to prepare pharmacy students for the provision of advanced services in community pharmacy

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Introduction

- Final year pharmacy students run their own pharmacy in small groups, undertaking consultations with simulated patients
- Community pharmacists now perform more advanced consultations during services including Pharmacy First
- A Pharmacy First consultation requires skills such as history taking, diagnosis and safety netting
- Application of these skills is of increasing importance for final year students and builds on consultation models covered during Year 3 of the MPharm¹

Aims:

- To evaluate the implementation of Pharmacy First into Year 4 community pharmacy simulation

Methods

- Each week, students completed two scenarios for a given Pharmacy First topic and immediate feedback was provided to the student and wider group by experienced pharmacists
- An MSForms survey was sent to 256 students at the end of semester 1 and 2, thematic analysis was performed on free text responses
- Three staff interviews were conducted with practicing community pharmacists who provided feedback during Pharmacy First simulation
- Ethical approval was obtained from the School of Pharmacy Research Ethics Committee at the University of Nottingham

Results – staff interviews

- Two themes were identified from thematic analysis of the staff interviews:
 - Theme 1.** Effect of prior assessment on consultations
 - Rushing due to time constraints
 - Inadequate safety netting
 - Theme 2.** Lack of confidence in resource management
 - Lack of understanding of red flags and exclusion criteria
 - Struggle to manage use of multiple resources
- Feedback from staff focused on these areas and was valued by students
- Improvements in consultations were noted by staff as the year progressed

Results – student survey

- Semester 1 response rate 27%, semester 2 response rate 23%

	End of semester 1 mean Likert score (SD)	End of semester 2 mean Likert score (SD)
I am confident I could successfully complete a Pharmacy First consultation	4.1 (0.8)	4.3 (0.7)
Scenarios prepared me well for the OSCE assessment	4.1 (0.6)	4.3 (0.8)

Table 1: Agreement with Likert statements (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree)

- By the end of semester 2, students felt they needed longer to complete a Pharmacy First consultation. This may reflect a better understanding of what needs to be covered during these consultations (Figure 1)

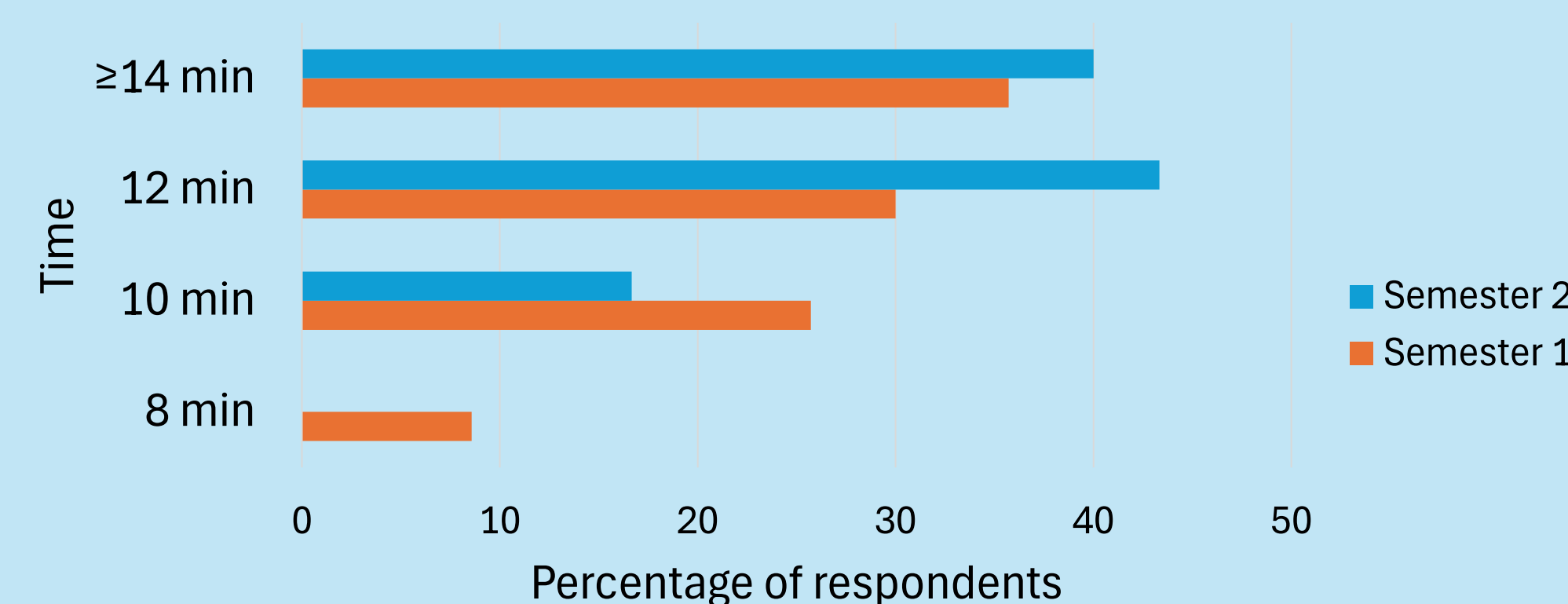


Figure 1: Estimated time required to complete a Pharmacy First consultation at the end of Semester 1 and 2

Results – student survey: thematic analysis

- Three themes were identified from thematic analysis of the free text feedback in the student survey:
 - Theme 1:** Feedback informed skill development
 - Development of skills over the year
 - Application of staff feedback to improve PGD use
 - Theme 2:** Prescribing preparedness
 - Confusion over prescribing role in community pharmacy
 - Desire to experience more prescribing in simulation
 - Theme 3:** Simulation and future practice
 - Realism of scenarios was appreciated
 - Variety and complexity of scenarios was also commended

Results – student survey: thematic analysis

Theme 1: Feedback informed skill development

'really useful personalised feedback'
'the feedback has always been thorough and well explained'

Theme 2: Prescribing preparedness

'more insight into prescribing and our role as prescribers'
'confusion of use of PGDs as a prescriber'
'more scenarios on prescribing....we will be prescribers when we finish our training and it might be good to familiarise ourselves with prescribing at final year'

Theme 3: Simulation and future practice

'made me more aware of the PGDs and when they are used and applied. Also, by practising these consultations I was able to use my knowledge and complete a real Pharmacy First service in my placement this year'

Figure 2: Quotes from students relating to the individual themes

Conclusions

- The use of the Pharmacy First service to pilot complex consultations with Year 4 pharmacy students was a success with positive feedback from staff, students and simulated patients
- Future work aims to include additional services such as the NHS hypertension case finding and NHS contraception services
- Students questioned the value of learning about PGD based services when they will be prescribers – this will be addressed proactively in future
- Prescribing clinics will be introduced focusing on limited skin conditions and travel medicine, allowing students to practice prescribing skills within a defined scope in a safe environment

References: 1. Hodson, K., Yemm, R., and Thomas, N. Introduction to the prescribing consultation, Pharm J, 2023; Vol 311, No 7979